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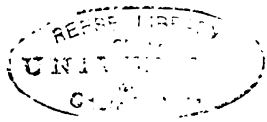

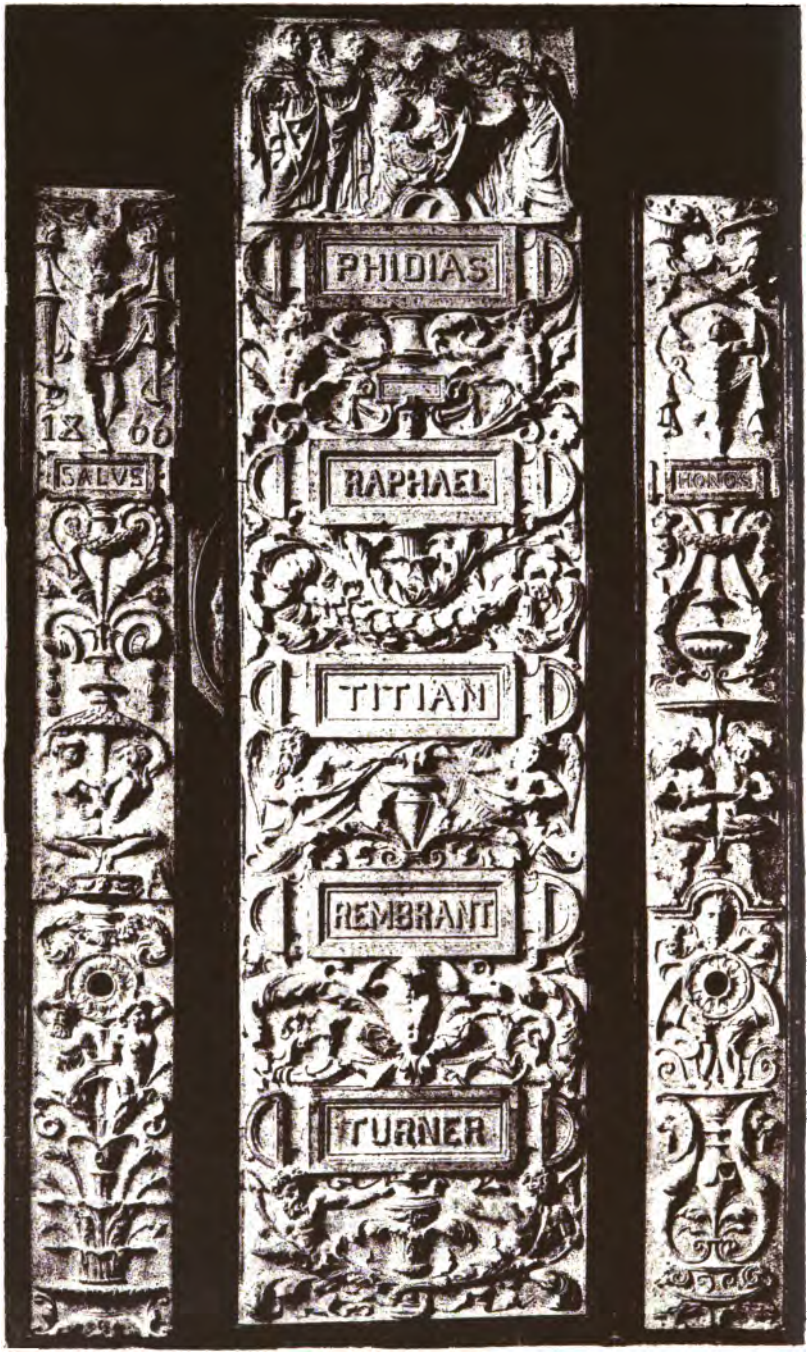
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LECTURES AND LESSONS
ON ART

LECTURES AND LESSONS ON ART

BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO A PRACTICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME

By the late F. W. MOODY
INSTRUCTOR IN DECORATIVE ART AT SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

WITH DIAGRAMS TO ILLUSTRATE COMPOSITION AND OTHER MATTERS

EIGHTH EDITION

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PREFACE.

THE following Lectures were given to a class of National Scholars at Kensington Museum, and they are published in the hope that they may be found useful to a larger circle of students, and perhaps not uninteresting to more advanced artists, who may wish to turn their attention to Ornament. With the exception of the Lecture on Education, which has been amplified, no additions and few emendations have been made, for what they might have gained in polish they would probably have lost in directness and force. They form the first part of an intended series, and are to be regarded simply as introductory to the Lectures on Architecture, Ornament, and the Human Figure, which I hope to be able to prepare for the press at some future time. The practical lessons on the principles of ornament were supplemented by constant reference to the magnificent collections immediately at hand. The illustrations are but a sorry substitute for such an advantage as this, but it is hoped they may help to explain my meaning to those who are not fortunate enough to enjoy a similar privilege.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

IT is hoped that the issue of a cheaper edition of "Lectures and Lessons on Art" will bring them within the means of a more numerous class of students, for it is more especially to the students that we must look for any effects these lectures may have.

I have little to complain of in the reception the book has hitherto met with. A man who goes to battle must expect hard blows, and having myself declared war against critics, I am bound to confess that even those that are hostile have generally exhibited a greater magnanimity than I had before credited them with. What strikes me the most (no doubt because I am a novice) is the startling and wholly irreconcilable contrast in their opinions. While I have to thank many for a more generous appreciation of my work than I ever expected or deserved, others can see no good in it whatever; some, too, are so obviously unjust that I cannot help thinking they have fitted on the caps I purposely left about, and are irritated at the jingling of the bells; most of their objections are already refuted in the book itself.

Although I believe that most of the amateur talk about Art does more harm than good, I am not one of those who think that no one is a good judge of a table unless he is able to make one. On the contrary, it is to the most cultivated

intellects that we must look for any escape from our present chaos, for it is unfortunately true (though the statement of it may be ungracious), that few artists are educated enough to systematize, or even to express clearly, the knowledge they may happen to possess. We want men of cool and philosophic temperament and, above all, of cultivated intellect, who will do for Art generally what Whewell and Willis did thirty-five years ago for Gothic architecture.

There are no doubt already many writers on Art of singular power, but even the best of them are hampered by prejudices; they have taken a side, or express the sentiments of a clique—conditions under which it is impossible for them to succeed in what is so much needed. Art is not a theory; it is a reality, a science, a handicraft; and it is by analysis alone that the present chaos will be resolved into order.

No one can take a comprehensive view of Art without being struck with the natural order in which styles and qualities range themselves. The history of Art, made up though it be of mental and material atoms apparently isolated, accidental, and sometimes in the highest degree capricious, flows on in an intelligible sequence. Take it at any point of time and all is harmonious; and decorative Art, considered generally, goes through a succession of phases which are reflected in each of its branches.

Art was formerly the spontaneous and natural expression of the age in which it existed, and each artist occupied his natural and proper place. Although his free will was never hampered, he seems to have been as constrained to do what he did as if he had acted under the most rigid supervision. He drew his inspiration from the facts and influences of his time, as surely as a daisy draws from the soil those essences which combine to make it what it is. We may with as good reason complain that a daisy is not a rose as we may abuse an early Italian artist because he did not draw rocks geologically correct; and Rubens was no more likely to have appeared at the time of Perugino, than dahlias to spring up side by side with daffodils; but all this is now, alas, altered: not only has this age no artistic direction of its own, but men doubt even

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their own characteristics. The fact is, they have been talked out of their wits. Bewildered with their own age, they vainly attempt to go back to others that take their fancy more. Some become Goths, some Elizabethans, some (probably infidels) venture into the Caroline ages, and even as far as the reign of Queen Anne; while others are so fastidious that they can tolerate nothing that does not come from either Italy or Greece. The only thing they all agree in is, abusing each other; and they are quite right, for the taste and consequently the patronage of half the nation is directed by epithets—epithets loudly shouted, but not a whit less absurd than the "isosceles triangle" with which O'Connell subdued the fish-woman. Above this motley crowd we may hear the voice of the philosophers, each with his own nostrum, and each judging the whole world from the view he is able to get of it from the eminence of his own tub. If we go round the fair and hear what each one has to say, we shall recognize, at least, *some* sense in the sermons of even the greatest quacks; and when we think of the variety, nay the contrariety, of the phases through which Art itself has actually gone, we may well ask ourselves the question, "What right have we to expect these doctors to agree?" Differ they needs must. The mistake lies not in men thinking their own views are right, but in their attempting to force their nostrums down the throats of every-one, whatever may be his constitution or his taste.

That men should thoroughly believe in themselves is no doubt necessary to success, and success is the more certain the more they concentrate their efforts on one phase of Art. It is even right they should have strong prejudices, for they form a cuticle impenetrable to reason, which would, perhaps, only dissipate their aim, and weaken their enthusiasm. But although these considerations would have a legitimate in-fluence in the shop, or the atelier, they could not with reason be admitted in a *general* system of education.

In the study of the art-objects in the Museum, nothing astonishes me more than their almost universal perfection. And here let me not be misunderstood. I do not maintain that each part is perfect; on the contrary, each part is often

grotesquely wrong; but improve them, and, in the great majority of instances, the unity, character, and beauty of the *whole* would have vanished.

When we consider that most of these things were made without any aid from academies, schools of design, or critics, and that they are almost invariably superior to productions of modern art, which is so superabundantly blessed in these respects, we can hardly escape the suspicion that our talk and teaching is probably doing as much harm as good; and were it not that I am buoyed up by the hope that we also may be performing our part in some ordered sequence, I should come to the conclusion that we are harrying Art to its death.

To organize a system of education which shall be of any practical use, or even innocuous under the circumstances of the present age, is a task that may well appal the boldest. It would probably be the wisest course to abandon the hope that modern art will ever have a natural direction and character of its own; and, frankly accepting eclecticism as inevitable, endeavour to raise Art education to a level with that of any other branch of learning, founding it on principles deduced from the practice of the greatest men—from an intelligent study of the history of Art,—a careful observation of the facts and principles of nature, and by carefully noting their natural affinities, at last separating its qualities into groups, for without this it is only the most rudimentary education that can be general—it is only the veriest platitudes that can be true, or even harmless, in *every* branch of Art.

For these reasons I ventured to draw out the "Scale of Art." I wished, in the first place, to show that the imitative system now so much in vogue was inapplicable to decorative art. My object was not to condemn but to classify. By pointing out those qualities which naturally cohere, I hoped to prevent the waste of time and energy which are so often spent in attempting to combine those which are naturally antagonistic. By defining the limits of various branches of Art, and showing that each has its natural landmarks, I hoped to put a stop at least to internecine warfare. I regret that my object has been misunderstood.

Some praise and some blame, but no one has taken the trouble to subject the position I have chosen to a careful survey; it will, I think, be found to be stronger than either my friends or my foes anticipate, but being myself unable to occupy it with sufficient power, I had hoped to have resigned the command to some abler hands who would have turned it into a stronghold.

With regard to Criticism, the source perhaps of more evil than education, I apprehend that nothing can be done to amend it. Repeated exposure of the most obvious fallacies can hardly have any appreciable effect as long as fallacies are repeated twenty times as often. Take the "Pall Mall" critic on this subject:—"Does Mr. Moody," he asks, "seriously imagine that when Rubens or Rembrandt painted there was no such thing as criticism; or that the great Italian painters were not subjected to the caustic remarks of their contemporaries, whose relation to them precisely corresponds to those of the critics of to-day?" To this I reply that Mr. Moody, in common with everyone who has thought a moment on the subject, does believe that ancient and modern criticism are as different as two things that bear the same name can well be. Formerly the opinion of a critic derived its weight from his personal attainments—the opinion of an ignorant man would go for no more than it was worth; now the influence of criticism depends on the circulation of the paper in which it appers. The "Pall Mall" critic's most partial friend would hardly assert that his mere personal opinion was of any value whatever.

It is almost impossible for a critic to spare the time to master a system or a theory which involves a comprehensive knowledge of any branch of learning, A few smart sentences are all he can afford. Indeed, these show his own cleverness to more advantage than any more serious or honest treatment could possibly do. They are more popular too; for most people have a secret satisfaction in seeing others, and I fear we must also add, their friends, cut up. And some criticisms have, I admit, the force and wit of a good caricature: for instance, we are all amused at Mr. Ruskin's description of Flaxman's art as "goggle-eyed men straddling behind round shields;" but,

generally, there is this important difference between caricatures and criticism—the one is of a person already very well known, the other is put forth as a veritable portrait of a stranger. The critic picks out a few damaged grains and exhibits them as a true sample of the sack.

In comparing old and modern criticism we should not omit to note that contemporary works were judged according to the taste of the age in which they were produced; but as the taste of our own has no definite direction, each critic judges works by an artificial standard of his own. The man with Gothic sympathies depreciates classic art; the classic man returns the compliment with interest: in short, modern criticism may be smart, clever, and amusing, but no one would seriously maintain that the system was just, or that it did any good. Men build up tyrannies stone by stone just as they did their castles centuries ago, and in the matter of criticism the press is as great and unjust a tyranny as the strongest robber-hold ever reared by a baron.

It would be a blessing if we could only get rid of the circular reasoners; surely, that is not too much to expect. The greater the attraction of these men's conceit, and the smaller the orbit of their attainments, the quicker they revolve and the more noise they make. The process is simple enough. A man evolves a theory from his internal consciousness; everything that does not conform to it is condemned as "false," "debased," &c. A good example of this style is afforded by the writer in the "Builder." He lays down the law, in a very peremptory way, that architecture ought not to be represented on painted glass. Now everyone knows how large a part architecture has always played in this art; that it has formed the background of every important window from the fifteenth century downwards. In many of our most splendid windows, it occupies at least half of the whole space. But such facts as these never in the least abash the circular critic. The practice of centuries, the works of the greatest masters, avail nothing against his *ipse dixit.* When I meet such a man I always think how unfortunate it is for us all that he did not live a thousand years ago; how much falsehood (the term for

differing from a critic) had then been avoided! but, coming as he does in these latter days, there are some inconveniences in adopting his theories, which perhaps never occurred to him. What am I to tell my pupils when I point out to them the almost universal use of architecture? Am I to say that the old artists did all this in their ignorance of true principles, but that since the advent of an anonymous critic in the "Builder" we have come on a new and better era?

I am sometimes almost persuaded there must be something peculiarly misleading in work, for almost all that is *done* is wrong; it is only what is *talked* that is right. Living in a Museum stored with deadly errors, we are, I fear, peculiarly susceptible to the baneful influence of *work*. Would it not be better to destroy all that has been done anterior to the advent, and put ourselves unreservedly under the direction of some Messiah of Art? But even here there are difficulties, for there are at least two hundred of them. No two preaching the same gospel.

The "Spectator" brings forward some extracts from Mr. Ruskin's works, to show that I have misrepresented him. If I have done so I at once apologize, for I really cannot follow a man four hundred miles through a tangled wood, to point out the exact spot where I think he has gone wrong.

I am very grateful to Mr. Ruskin for his careful and beautiful descriptions of the facts of nature, but there my gratitude, I confess, ceases. His writings, and more especially his own style of criticism, have certainly fostered an obtrusion of detail which is fatal to the beauty of Art. He leaves out the individuality of the artist, forgetting that men take rank, not by their truth of detail, but by their calibre of mind.

I quite agree with the "Spectator" as to the probable danger of teaching composition; but I think he forgets that my lectures are chiefly on *ornamental art*, in which he will perhaps admit that composition is an essential element. On this subject I must refer the reader to what I have already written in the preface to the plates at the end of the book.

I may perhaps be allowed to mention a fact of which I may

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well be proud. I have had the honour to receive a most complimentary letter from Monsieur Guillaume, the well-known director of the "Ecole des Beaux Arts" at Paris; while Monsieur Galland, the talented Professor of Decorative Art in the same institution, has adopted my book as the basis of his system of teaching.

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ADDRESS ON COMMENCEMENT OF THE SESSION.

AS success in Art, as in everything else, is impossible without effort, and as all teaching without this is useless, I am anxious at once to lay before you the moral and personal aspects of study, and to point out some of those difficulties and obstacles which are most likely to beset your path.

I must first remind you that study is a *discipline* which strengthens our faculties; the want of this among our artists is one of the reasons of the comparative failure of modern art. Our education is too desultory, vague, and imperfect to serve this end. The exact, definite, thorough comprehension which we find in every other branch of learning is almost extinct in art. The knowledge, for instance, of Greek particles, which is expected in the scholar, the exact and complete knowledge of geometry in the mathematician, and the minute and accurate observation which is necessary in every branch of science, has no counterpart in the modern education of artists. This is all the more to be regretted because the great majority of students begin the study of art so early, that their previous general education must needs have been very imperfect. In mere imitation, knowledge and the power of mind which is acquired by study are not absolutely

essential; but we must work from another motive, and I venture to think that in so comprehensive and difficult a subject as art we certainly do not require *less* intellectual training than in other professions; to attempt to master it with *none* is surely a mistake, and I look forward with some hope to the effect of a thorough systematic study of the human figure, wholly independent of the artistic power you will doubtless acquire by it.

The first impediment to our progress which I shall notice is that the faculties most useful in art seem, unluckily, to be those which are least active; we see, and even handle, objects day after day, and yet when asked to draw or even to describe them, we are utterly confounded, and, to our surprise, we often find ourselves ignorant of their simplest forms.

That the faculty of observation, which is the basis not only of art, but of science as well, should never have been systematically cultivated, is a blot in general as well as in art education. You should endeavour to supply this want by setting yourselves to draw some object you may have seen during the day. You will by these means not only find out gaps in your mind which have to be filled, but will by degrees find your observation become more accurate and your memory more full and retentive, qualities invaluable in art. Your view will be expanded, your power greater; you will begin to comprehend the work of those who have gone before you, and will see to what fresh heights you have to climb.

Want of intellectual effort is another great cause of failure in art. The modern systems of education, to a great extent, cause or excuse this. Men spend half their time in stippling, niggling, and imitative painting, which require no more thought than whittling a stick; but this is not the worst of it, they are all the time deluding themselves with the idea that they are working hard. But be not deceived, it is only by intellectual effort that each step is surmounted.[1]

[1] There must, of course, be a great deal of almost mechanical drudgery in art, and it is only by practice that excellence of execution can be attained. But what I complain of is, that in the present age so much of it is mindless; and I know no more deplorable sight than to go into the

Intellectual work is the hardest work of all, and men will wriggle, turn, twist, and do everything to evade it; but I wish to put before you in the plainest possible way that there is certain work to be done. It is of no use to look out for a gap in the hedge. The advantages of going at it at once are enormous. Just, for instance, consider the result of avoiding the effort necessary to master the position and details of the ankle. The want of this knowledge will probably plague you at least twice a week: it will delay your work, you will get into trouble every time you draw the figure, making altogether a sum total of annoyance, unsatisfactory work and feeling, a hundred times greater than the expenditure of time and thought which would have been necessary to surmount the difficulty at first. And above all things, remember that you are learning to draw, you are not manufacturing drawings. If a drawing, however beautifully it may be finished, fails to have impressed upon the mind any one fact of nature, it is entirely useless. Even the best of these laborious drawings, which often take three, four, five, or even seven months in execution, is not worth five shillings. Just consider for one moment the waste of time such a process entails. I know from practical experience how useless such drawings are in an educational point of view, and I have over and over again found that many of the men who produce them are not only ignorant of the human form, generally, and in detail, but they know nothing of the most rudimentary principles of light and shade. The secret of all this lamentable waste of time is that the drawings have been done with the sole object of getting a prize, and they have been done without any intellectual effort.

And here let me say one word on what may perhaps be considered a low motive to exertion, the pecuniary value of such instruction as you get here. You should regard the time

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antique school, and see there the manufacture of those elaborate drawings which excite the admiration of the ignorant, but which in the case of ninety out of a hundred students leave on their minds no impression whatever of the form, or any one single quality of the statue they have copied. They might just as well have been engaged in manufacturing a copy of a map of London.

spent in study as capital from which you will derive future interest. Suppose, for instance, it enables you to earn £150 or £200 a-year, it represents the interest on a value of £2,000. To many it will, I hope, be much more, so that you should make the very best use of your time. It is no doubt difficult to live on your scholarship, but I most strongly advise you by the most rigid economy to endeavour to avoid the necessity of supplementing your income by petty commissions, by which you earn little and learn less. Devote all your energies to accumulating a store of exact knowledge, to laying a solid foundation on which you can build afterwards. This, I am convinced, is the wisest economy. You will keenly regret, in the practice of your profession, the want of knowledge which you ought to have acquired as students. Your ignorance of some essential will hamper your progress, or, what is worse, you may be tempted to adopt the contemptible arts of the charlatan, a character not unknown in art.

Want of definite aim is another serious drawback to success in art.

Such a multiplicity of views are advanced about art, and with such plausibility, that it is no wonder that the student is bewildered, while on education there are as many opinions as men ; but even a sensitive appreciation of the beauties of the different schools, though essential in an artist, is often a source of distraction.

We stand before a Dutch picture and are charmed with its truth, its force, and the skill and neatness of its execution. It seeems to leave nothing to be wanted, and we think how much better it is than many more pretentious works, and how we should like to be able to produce such exquisite qualities. But a little further on we come to the stately forms and majestic action of the Roman or Florentine schools, and are almost awe-struck before them, and we register a vow to adhere rigidly to the study of form. But we no sooner enter the next room than all our good resolutions melt away before the glowing splendour of the Venetians, and we say to ourselves " After all, colour is the glory of art, let us try and learn its mysteries."

This diffusion of aim cannot but paralyse the energy which is necessary to success in so difficult a study as art, and it is hardly necessary for me to point out the very great advantage of *direction.* In the first place, we are here with a definite object, not narrow, it is true, but still sufficiently definite to prevent us wandering far. I mean the study of *ornamental art.* So that we need not be running up and down the whole scale of art unable to make up our minds at what point to rest; but besides this, I wish you clearly to comprehend that change from one system of *instruction* to another is generally the result of want of energy, which leads to desultory attempts, none carried to a successful issue, it comes from attempting to evade difficulties instead of grappling with them, and then trying to persuade onrselves that the difficulties belong to the system, and that in another we should certainly have succeeded. Depend upon it this complaining of system is, in most cases, merely another version of the bad workman finding fault with his tools.

There are difficulties, very great difficulties, in art, but believe me, they are not simply in systems, or this or that combination of colours, or in mediums or brushes. I do not mean that we ought not to care about such things, on the contrary, they are of the greatest importance, but in the long run you would do well to consider difficulties as defects in your mental or executive power which must be resolutely conquered by intellectual effort and practice.

Let us frankly recognize the difficulties of art, and adhering to one system fairly master them; and I am convinced that an adherence to one system, though you may fancy it is not the best that could be devised, will not only save a great deal of time, but will certainly give you the power to change your method with success at any future time. But there is another moral failing very common among students of art, and in some measure peculiar to them, which is equally detrimental to character and progress, and that is *conceit.*

Now, for even an accomplished artist to be conceited is a sure proof of his ignorance. If he really comprehended the dignity and splendour of the works of the old masters, to say

nothing of the inimitable beauty of nature, his own works would be a constant reminder of his humble attainments. For a student who has as yet done nothing, or at most has only produced studies which show little promise of future excellence, to be conceited, is certainly, at first sight, quite unaccountable. But that the study of art does produce that extraordinary compound of self-sufficiency and ignorance, called a genius, is an undoubted fact, a fact of which it will not be waste of time to trace the cause.

There are at the present moment in schools of art, probably, more *geniuses* than in all the universities of Europe. Why is this? In the first place, their studies are so vague and indefinite, that they really have no idea whereabouts they are in the race for excellence. They do not understand that they have as yet scarcely started. Their eye has to be educated even to see nature truly: and as yet the great men have worked in vain for them. When studies are exact, and students, though perhaps ignorant themselves, live in an atmosphere of learning, and have some idea of the extent and difficulty of the sciences to be mastered, no such conceit is developed, and I very much doubt if you would find a single *genius* in all Cambridge.

But, I think, in great measure, this feeling of conceit arises from a practice of self-deceit, by which we paint in imagination pictures which generally combine the form of Michael Angelo, the colour of Titian, and the touching pathos of modern sentimentality. This imaginary composition, in the highest degree visionary and vague, even in imagination, is compared with the actual work of some Royal Academician, much, of course, to his disadvantage, and that of the institution to which he belongs, and the student in time is really convinced of his superiority: but a very simple test will rudely dissipate such castles as these. Compare your *work* with work, not imagination with work. You do not know what stately castles your rivals also may build; but, perhaps, like you they find it difficult to realise their beauty on canvas.

This mental failing is of the same brood as another, which, because it is so universal, generally escapes observation.

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Men complain of their position, their health, and even of their stature and looks, and think that Providence has dealt hardly with them in these respects. But though mental capacity is of as great or greater importance than any of these, no man ever complains that he is short of it; he is always perfectly satisfied that in intellect, at least, he is equal if not superior to even the best of his neighbours. He is quite able to judge of the merits of any question, however abstruse. His education, it is true, may unluckily have been neglected, but he feels that the raw material is quite of the best quality. Now, why is this? Simply because the views of a narrow mind are narrow. A man fancies he sees the whole distance, but in reality the extent of his vision is the measure of his own capacity. No doubt this blind conceit is in some measure providential, for if even the greatest minds could at once see all that is before them, few would venture to set out on so long a journey. Let us hope, therefore, that in so difficult a subject as art conceit *may* have its uses, and a careful consideration of the foregoing train of thought reveals a danger in exactly the opposite direction; that is, the depressing effect of conscious inferiority when our knowledge is much in advance of our execution.

Owing to the great facilities we enjoy of seeing original works of the greatest men and the universal diffusion of engravings and photographs, while at the same time our art education is laboriously long and inefficient, this depression is one of the commonest ailments among artists, particularly among those of a sensitive nature. Their spirit is damped, and they are starved for want of that pleasure, or, if you like to call it so, a little of that very conceit I have just now condemned, a sort of self-satisfaction in their work which exhilarates and stimulates to fresh exertion, without which the pursuit of art would be laborious indeed.

I have pointed out these pitfalls that you may the better be able to steer your course between them, and I will conclude this address with the hope that steady study and manly determination to face the difficulties of your art may enable you to steer a straight course to true excellence, neither on the

one hand be puffed up with empty pretension, or on the other appalled by the greatness of your predecessors, or the steepness of the heights that have to be mounted. Like an opposite hill they are not as steep as they look; and never forget that even the biggest buildings are built by one stone at a time.

ON SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ACCIDENTS.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we consider, not only the splendour of Italian art, but the ease with which a mastery of it seems to have been acquired, and see that works which are still the admiration of the world were produced at an age when even the most promising of our students have scarcely mastered the rudiments of their art,[1] we cannot but come to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong with the art-education of our day. To trace the true reasons of the barren results of our laborious systems is an inquiry of the greatest moment, not only to us here who are immediately concerned, but to the whole nation, and even to the world.

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[1] Raphael, invited to Rome at twenty-three, died at thirty-seven; Ghirlandaio was invited by the Pope at thirty; Sebastian del Piombo had mastered every excellence of art at thirty; Julio Romano was twenty-two when Raphael died; Andrea del Sarto was invited by Francis I. at thirty; Giorgione died at thirty-four; A. Carracci died at forty-nine; Correggio died at forty; Parmigiano died at thirty-seven; Guido had made a name at twenty-five; Rubens was only thirty-one when he returned to Antwerp from Italy, where he had executed many fine works.

We cannot glance at the pages of Vasari without being struck at what we should now regard as the wonderful precocity of the artists whose lives and whose works he so eloquently describes. Their progress will appear still more extraordinary if we consider that at this early age they knew their business thoroughly, in a manner that even our most experienced artists do not approach. Their workmanship was unexceptionable; it was not an ignorant striving after an effect; it was not the stuttering of a man trying to say something in an unknown tongue, but the finished eloquence of an accomplished rhetorician; they knew their business and did it. And this mastery of their craft is the secret of the excellence as well as the profusion of their work; for rapidity of production not only enables more work to be done, but it stimulates invention, while a multitude of works affords a larger experience.

We must also take into account the scope of their education and capacities. Nothing seemed to come amiss to the cinquecento artist; he would often be at once a painter, a sculptor, an architect, a designer in wood, in terra cotta, in silver and in gold.

The extent and profusion of the work of the great Italians makes our own art appear all the more mean and niggardly, and we cannot turn from this wealth of intellect and of hand to the petty aims and the feeble and flimsy results of modern English art without a feeling of depression, I had almost said of despair.

An artist now pursues his education in a laborious but desultory manner, he is generally left to his own resources, and has to learn art pretty much as Adam would have done. He is tossed hither and thither by the varying art-theories of the day, and is embarrassed and confused by the variety of the different schools. With infinite pains and difficulty he at last manages to express his ideas, and is enabled to tell some story on canvas (the more pathetic it is the greater artist is he considered), his process, if process it may be called, is so laborious that he can produce but one, two, or three pictures a-year: if you were to ask him to design an

inkstand, a cup, a chimney-piece, or a room, he would stare with astonishment, and some little suspicion that you meant to insult him, for are not such things done by altogether an inferior grade of beings? ornamental art is an art of a meaner and less refined growth than his. If you ask his opinion about the architecture of a house, the style of a painted window, or a piece of goldsmith's work, if he is honest he will tell you he knows nothing about such things, but if not he will talk a great deal, but the more he talks the more will he show his ignorance.

The painter knows nothing of architecture: the architect of painting, he puts out his ornament in the same way as he does his washing! The sculptor confines his attention to busts and statues, and is satisfied if they resemble his sitters.

The contrast in scope, quality and power between old and modern art is so great and so marked that at first one is almost persuaded that, measured by the giants of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we must be intellectual pigmies, but I am certain that this is far from being the case.

In all other walks of life there seems no want of either energy or invention, and the older I become the more I am convinced that the very highest qualities of the painter or the poet are by no means rare as far as conception is concerned; what is rare is the patient perseverance necessary to mature and bring forth ideas, and to acquire the power of expressing them. Are we then idle, or indifferent to art? I think not. Are then all the shortcomings of our art to be attributed to defective education? I answer, in a great measure they undoubtedly are, and it will be my object in these lectures to point out the defects and suggest the remedies.

But lest it should be thought that I ignore influences which are independent of education, and art-education in particular, I will briefly state those accidents of climate and country, and those phases of modern life and thought which seem most obviously to depress the vitality and weaken the growth of art.

A southern climate seems to affect and elevate the imagination as much by its genial influence on the organisation of

man as by the beauty of the scenes it presents. In Italy, in Greece and the countries which enclose the Mediterranean Sea, existence is of itself a delight; the heaven presents a vaulted dome illimitable in extent, compared with which our northern skies are but a dingy ceiling; the clearness of the atmosphere and the larger scale of nature alike expand the view; our conception of earth, the sea, the phenomena of nature, is larger, more simple, and less trammelled with detail than in our northern climes; all things seem in the south to approach nearer to an ideal type.

Travelling will afford to the stranger a temporary and perhaps more exquisite enjoyment of southern scenes than is felt by those who live in them, and the artist can lay up a store of impressions for memory and imagination; but I fear we must conclude that those who are as it were habitually saturated with the larger and more ideal aspects of nature and whose life and faculties expand under their influence, must in the long run be superior to those who dwell in a less genial climate where their views are both literally and metaphorically narrower.

It is in its effects on ideal art rather than on landscape that the difference of climate will be perceived; those aspects of nature which most affect the imagination can seldom be rendered in art; the blue dome above cannot be painted, and if it could, would certainly be surpassed in interest by the infinite variety of a more clouded sky.

If we turn from the phenomena of nature to the works of man in Italy and in England, we shall find the same relative qualities in each.

Not only does the clearness of the atmosphere enable us to see a city at a distance so that the eye comprehends it as an object, but a city in Italy and in most continental states has far greater compactness, unity, and individuality, than with us; and in the middle ages the aspect of a continental city must have been imposing, it was enclosed with walls and entered by gates flanked with frowning-towers; this shutting in clearly defined its limits so that it stood out distinct from the country, but the mean and straggling suburbs of a modern

English town, neither town nor country, but each destroying the beauty of the other, are deficient in all the qualities that affect the imagination. Our climate[1] limits our out-door enjoyments, and lessens the visible beauty of our lives, while external decoration, statues, vases, fountains, and all the paraphernalia of art, if possible in the north, are far less appropriate than in the south, and even interior decoration is affected by our want of light.

But it is in the scale of our architecture that our greatest defect will be found; and I wish some historian would explain the almost universal meanness and pettiness of our buildings. The long winter, and the long nights of a northern clime, may excuse the smallness of our rooms, for it would be difficult either to warm or light the more stately apartments of the continent, and comfort and snugness are perhaps incompatible with any degree of size and magnificence; but our public buildings, and even fortifications, which, if wanted at all, should be as large here as on the continent, are equally contemptible. The gateways, for instance, of Winchelsea (at the time they were built a town of great importance, and obviously liable to attacks from the French) are so small as to appear almost like toys.

We are singularly unfortunate in the aspect of our towns, and I know no greater contrast than is presented by those of Belgium and Kent; and it must be remembered that in this case the difference cannot be attributed to climate, for the latitude of each is about the same. In the Belgian cities there is not only the Cathedral, but many churches hardly inferior in size, and often of equal splendour. There is a Town Hall rivalling the Cathedral itself; a Palace of Justice, a palace indeed; a residence fit for a prince, for the mayor; houses of architectural importance for its nobles and great merchants; vast hotels, and a general aspect of magnificence. How sad

[1] In speaking of climate, I cannot omit to notice the depressing dulness of our winter, and the loss of time from the shortness of the days, and the frequent fogs, which put a stop to painting.

The loss of time from the absurd custom of never getting up till eight o'clock is also very serious to artists, for daylight is to them an essential.

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is the contrast if we take such a town as Canterbury as an example. There is, indeed, the Cathedral, a glorious church, made still more glorious by its towering above everything around it. There is the noble gateway of St. Augustine's, there is Westgate and the remains of a city wall, finer than is usually to be found in England, but, alas! what else? Look at the churches! look at the Town Hall, the Corn Exchange, and the markets! How utterly contemptible! There is not one single building that is, I will not say above mediocrity, but above meanness.

If the aspect of our cities is little likely to develope, or encourage the love or the practice of art, an inquiry into the cause of the universal meanness of our buildings will, I fear, prove still more disheartening. In the English character there is a sort of protest against show. How constantly we hear the praises of the plain and unpretending, while everything that is not absolutely necessary is condemned as extravagant. A rate for a church or a town-hall is almost universally grudged, and every argument is used to reduce its size or its splendour. Now as art is nothing more or less than what is here meant by "show," the prospect of its flourishing in so uncongenial an atmosphere is not very encouraging.

This natural contempt of appearances, or, in other words, this stolid insensibility to art, has been exalted into a virtue by the teaching of the Puritans, and the great mass of the people, consisting of the majority of the middle classes, still presents an obstacle impervious to its influence, and fatal to the establishment of an art worthy of being called national; and gloomy indeed would be our prospects, were it not that art can flourish as an exotic; the chief things necessary being an artist to work and a patron to pay.

There are, however, many signs of a hopeful change in the national taste. In London, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and many others of our largest cities, there are not only many buildings which will compete in size and architectural pretension with the palaces of Italy, but the people at large take a growing interest and pride in the grandeur of their city.

Having thus touched on climate and architecture, we will

note some of those phases of modern life and society that seem also in some measure to account for the depression of art. In the first place, modern life is more complex than it was; men, even in the humblest walk of life, cannot devote their isolated attention to one object or occupation with the intense devotion that was common in former days. With all its advantages, the spread of literature has caused most of us to waste a great deal of time in desultory reading and speculations on every conceivable subject, particularly if it happens to have nothing whatever to do with our business. We read a great deal and think but little. The time spent, for instance, in reading the newspaper is often worse than wasted, for it weakens the intellect. We have lost that stern, simple, almost hard conception and grasp that our forefathers had, and of all professions that of art is perhaps the one that would most suffer by the change.

I do not here say anything about the distractions of the theories, and bewildering criticisms of the present day on art, because I am now treating of those influences which are accidental.

Another serious evil which artists have to contend against is the universal ugliness of modern life. I need not speak of the poor, how they toil and sweat, and what dull squalid lives the poor labourers in our cities live (God grant they may mend, but they seem to me to sink every day into a lower depth of despond), but the life of even our most prosperous classes is dreary, solemn, and ugly. This want of beauty and grace, both in public and private life, deprives our artists of the true source of inspiration, and makes the art sympathies of the whole people dull and sluggish.

I need hardly say that touching and beautiful incidents are common enough, but these are morally rather than physically beautiful, and though it is very natural that artists should endeavour to paint such incidents, it must not be forgotten that the true field of art is the physical aspect of nature; it is not the special business of the artist to teach morality, or to waken our dormant sympathies: he may tell a pathetic story

on canvas without possessing the least artistic capacity, and one of the least encouraging phases of modern art is this tendency to evade its true sphere.

The stupid monotony of society, the excessive fear of doing anything out of fashion, or of being thought peculiar or demonstrative, has almost exterminated the expression of action. The poetry of motion, and even a natural vivacity, is rarely seen in good society. A fear of being thought out of taste leads to no taste at all in externals. A correct neatness has taken the place of beauty and splendour, and all state, ceremony and array is laughed at as pretentious and obsolete.

Men of position seem to shrink from observation by being quite unobtrusive; they wish to enjoy, without having the courage to assert their rank; they feel that in these unhappy times their position is not cheerfully recognised by those below them, for is not everyone not only equal, but better than anybody else? Where everyone is equally a gentleman, the picturesque variety of dress fast dies out, and in a few years hence, the men of half the globe will, without exception, be dressed in tail-coats and chimney-pot hats.

Another cause, deeply affecting our national character and our art, is the grinding, incessant toil, mental and bodily, which we all undergo. To many it is necessary for their daily bread, but to almost as many it is a self-imposed task; we so strive to improve our position, that we grudge ourselves even a day's leisure. We have no gala days, no happy holidays. We have nothing to supply the place of the saints' days, and the splendid services of the church which afforded to the artists of the middle ages a constant presentment of picturesque action and gorgeous colour.

Almost every incident of life is less pictorial and less dramatic than it used to be. Compare, for instance, a charge of knights in armour, or a hand-to-hand combat with ponderous swords, with the mechanical rather than human action of a modern battle, or the aspect of an old ship of war with that of a modern monitor.

Then again our life is too secluded; we pride ourselves on

the comfort and respectability of domestic life, and shut ourselves up with our families. Domestic life is no doubt adapted to foster every virtue, but, oftener than we like to confess, it is simply selfish, dull, and wearisome, and our very souls are fretted away by the damned iteration of its petty and ignoble details.[1] If we revert from the stupidity of our lives, from the dead and monotonous level, to the hills and picturesque valleys of the society of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when as yet philosophers had not instilled into the minds of the people that all men are equal, and when even a tailor was not ashamed of being a tailor, when rank was frankly recognized and as frankly asserted and expressed by all its surroundings, the pageantry and state, the picturesque variety of a numerous retinue, the beauty of dress and equipage, the trappings of horses, the sumptuous fittings of barge or gondola, the palaces, gardens, and stately terraces, not only contributed to the pride and pleasure of the rich and noble, but as far as sight goes, were equally shared by all classes, and life was made more beautiful thereby; and while all these things afforded endless employment to artists of all sorts, they presented a constant succession of pictures, varied in form and subject, gorgeous in colour, and in the highest degree stimulating to the development and appreciation of art.

We have as artists fallen on unfortunate times. We have neither the picturesque variety of the old society nor the splendid public life which might be possible in a republic founded on the equality of man.

My personal sympathies are entirely in favour of what is now regarded as an obsolete and impossible system, and I dread the time—which as far as I can see is inevitable—when the coarse and brutal will with vulgar insolence tread out all

[1] The relation between master and servant, already difficult, will, thanks to our philosophers, be very soon unbearable, and domestics having degenerated into mere parasites, the middle classes will be compelled to abandon a mode of life rendered intolerable by their irritation. It is not impossible that our pent-up lives may in this way be forced into happier and more social channels, and a collegiate or hotel system may perhaps relieve our descendants from evils we now groan under in vain.

that is noble and good; but our life is now so dull and ugly, that, as an artist, I cannot help looking forward with hope to a time beyond—a time which of course I shall never live to see—when the worst phases of a detestable revolution are over, and when the powers that produced it are again curbed, and our own dull and selfish domestic existence shall have widened into a happier and more public life, when the people may themselves possess and enjoy the glory and refinement of art.

With regard to the study of the nude figure, we can never have the rare opportunities of the Greeks; but the hardly inferior art of the Renaissance, when the opportunities were scarcely better than in our own day, ought to be some encouragement to us to strive to attain excellence by other if more circuitous paths. We should never fail to avail ourselves of any chances of seeing the figure in action. Among half-stripped navvies, and the titanic forms of men employed in gas and other plutonic works, in wrestling, running, athletic sports, and more especially in bathing and football, we should ever watch for and note the change of form in the muscles, the balance of the figure, its harmonious line, and the vigorous expression of its action.

LECTURE II.

ON MODERN THEORIES.

I HAVE already dwelt on the effects of climate, and those aspects of society which, though not immediately connected with art, explain in some measure the difference between its ancient and modern development. We will now proceed to those subjects which, though part and parcel of art, cannot be considered as belonging to education, reserving the question of education for a subsequent lecture; and let us first consider what we may call the "subject" of art.

For a very considerable period it never occurred to an artist to represent anything else than sacred subjects, and even as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century the subjects of two-thirds of the pictures were taken from the Bible alone; and even their arrangement and treatment were often traditional; they were, in short, ready made to the hand of the artist. He had not to rack his brains to find out something strikingly original or pathetic. The real incidents of Holy Writ, or the imaginary ones of tradition, afforded everything he could wish for. Nothing could be more pathetic, dramatic, picturesque, or forcible than the scenes he would either choose for himself, or be commanded to paint by his patrons; but not only this, they were essentially ideal. I mean by this that no one at that time ever thought it neces-

sary to attempt to represent the scenes as they actually occurred. Such a thought as this never crossed the mind of either patron or painter. The artist took the incident and told it in his own way. He arranged his subject, clothed his figures, put in his backgrounds with the simple aim of telling his story, and covering his canvas in the most forcible and the most pictorial manner.[1]

Then again, when men felt a little weary of saints, and any questionable story from Holy Writ was seized upon with avidity, partly as a change, and breaking out of suppressed human nature, and partly because it afforded an opportunity of painting the female figure, the same manner of treatment was adopted; and I need not say that as the beautiful mythology of the Greeks gradually crept in (for the renaissance was not a renaissance of art alone) the ideal treatment was more than ever necessary.

The advantage of all this was enormous, the artist was able to devote all his energies to art. Now-a-days the critics compel him to be an historian, an antiquarian, a topographer, and a geologist, and woe betide him if he neglect the minutest detail.

If he wishes to paint a Scripture subject, he must set out at once for the Holy Land, and there, by the aid of the best commentators, must endeavour to find the exact scene of the incident he has chosen to illustrate. The conservative tendencies of the East will excuse or justify a convenient adherence to the present costume, but does it ever occur to these sticklers for literal truth that the whole aspect of the country is altered, that what was then "a land flowing with milk and honey" is now little better than a desert? To

[1] Scripture subjects are now supposed (I think erroneously) to be hackneyed. That artists should have a prudent reluctance to come into direct rivalry with their great predecessors is only natural, and that those who see in a picture only its subject should feel an objection to hang sacred and profane subjects side by side, is not only natural but commendable; but the dogma that such subjects should be confined to churches (from which, however, they are practically banished), is only another expression of the difference of thought in our own time and in the golden ages of art.

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restore the scene to any likeness of what it was two thousand years ago, it would be necessary to clothe it with imaginary verdure, a fraud of which no "conscientious" painter would be either capable or guilty.

The study of Science, no doubt, directs attention to the accuracy of the details rather than to the general beauty of nature, and at the same time tends to the neglect of the classics, which furnished inexhaustible subjects for ideal art, but now the mythology of the Greeks, if we may believe our philosophers, is altogether obsolete. As we no longer believe their stories, we cannot and ought not to be impressed by them, and therefore they afford the worst of all subjects for art. I am really almost ashamed to state anything so obvious as that the beauty of a story does not consist in its truth in the sense that the facts related actually took place, and that half the stories of the old mythology are allegories which are as true now as ever they were, and that everyone who is not a philosopher understands and feels their beauty in precisely the same manner as the more intelligent of the Greeks did themselves. No one knew better than Apuleius that the history of Cupid and Psyche was not true ; yet, if our philosophers are right, he, of all men, would have been the least able to appreciate its beauty.

The scale of pictures is also a matter which has a most important bearing on their treatment; and, of course, on all the qualities of art. The palaces and churches of Italy afforded vast spaces for painting, and I need hardly point out the enormous impetus given to art by the Roman Catholic religion, which, I will not so much say eagerly welcomed art, as that art was part of it, and grew up spontaneously with it.

Now, let us contrast all this with what happens in our own day, and in our own country. The religion of England till quite recently spurned art from her doors. This was, no doubt, in some measure a reaction against art, which had become mindless, meretricious, and degraded, but I fear we must attribute it in a far greater measure to the general opinion of Protestants, that art is out of place in a church, an opinion which no serious artist can for a moment entertain.

As far as architecture is concerned, there is, no doubt, a change in popular feeling, and the whole country is covered with churches, many of great architectural beauty, and all showing an æsthetic, and not merely utilitarian motive, and even Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists build meeting houses with a pretension and adornment which twenty years ago they would not have scrupled to have set down as mere trappings of "the scarlet whore"; but although architecture has a place in the service of the church, with few exceptions painting is still banished, and although there may be a growing feeling in one party of the church in its favour, the scale, and consequently the treatment of pictures, must still be small as long as Gothic architecture is alone considered proper for churches; for the peculiarity and leading defect of that style is that all the spaces which are adapted for paintings are cut up into small angular and spiky shapes.

Our ordinary houses afford no encouragement for large pictures, and even those of the nobility are for the most part cramped and petty, and present no spaces, where owners have the taste, for mural paintings of large or ideal subjects.

And here I cannot omit to note the enormous advantage the old artists had over ourselves in the inspiriting effect of conscious progress. Every day some fresh advance was made, some quality of nature was seized and absorbed by the sympathetic appreciation of some great mind, which seemed as it were to cast Nature in a new mould, and exhibit her to the admiration of the world. Artists advanced as an army in majestic progress over the whole domain of nature, they had not, as we have, the depressing consciousness that, take what path we may, we shall find some greater than ourselves have been there before us; and though the same flowers are growing there as of old, we find them inscribed with the names of others. Hampered by the fear of plagiarism, scared by the screams of critics, we are almost afraid to walk in any of the great avenues of nature, lest we should be accused of hanging on the skirts of someone who has gone that way before, and men even of power are content to seek laborious byeways, which from their very pettiness, have escaped the notice of their

great predecessors, merely that they may enjoy the empty satisfaction of fancying themselves original.

We have noticed the effect of our climate, the aspect of our cities, the tendencies of modern society and thought, the universal ugliness of our life, the banishment of art from our churches, the study of science to the neglect of the classics, and have seen how adverse to art, and particularly to ideal art, all these things are, but, disastrous as is their effect, it is, I believe, as nothing compared with the baneful influence, the distraction and error caused by modern theories and criticism, and I particularly wish you to note that it is against *ideal* art that the tendencies and aspects of modern society seem to conspire. These are, unluckily, for the most part beyond our immediate control; but the art theories to which we submit our judgments are entirely of our own making and acceptance; and here I must pause to answer an objection to the revival of ideal art which will probably occur to you. If the tendency of modern thought is adverse to ideal art, does not that prove it to be out of harmony with the spirit of the age, and therefore out of place altogether? Now, that is a very important question.

I quite admit that the characteristics of modern art are explained and to some extent excused by the circumstances and aspects of modern life, and that they are in that sense entirely in harmony with them; but surely you would not say that because our life is ugly, therefore our art should be ugly too? is it not exactly the reverse?

If the tendency of scientific pursuits is to go into minute detail, is it not above all things desirable that our minds should be brought to contemplate general beauty? If we are pent up in cities, and lead ungraceful lives, is not that the very reason why our souls should be refreshed by the glory of the ideal? Of what use, I may ask, is art if it cannot minister to the natural aspirations of man for beauty, and is the fact that there are so few outlets for these aspirations to be pleaded as a reason why we should keep closed the portals of the temple of art? If photography can for sixpence produce us a profusion of minute detail, it cannot surely be a wise

economy for man to waste laborious hours in competing with it, while he neglects that noble part of his nature from which alone can proceed the poetry of art. That we are alive to all the beauty of the poets notwithstanding the ugliness of our lives, and that even the most degraded are acutely sensitive to music, should prove to us what hidden stores of mysterious sympathies lie deep in the heart of man, only to be awakened and kindled by the master spell. Are we to shut up one great avenue to our senses and souls at the mere dictation of critics? And you must remember that though the circumstances I have stated in my former lecture may make the production of ideal art more arduous, the appreciation of it would in every educated person be made more keen by contrast; but so long as critics conspire to run down every attempt at ideal art as conventional, pretentious, and academic, artists will not go through the training that is necessary to produce it; and at present imitative art is a necessity to most of them, for, to say nothing of their indifference to the great principles of nature and art as well, few can move a step without the model before them. For this reason it is to be feared that the artists themselves will side with the critics, and the leaven which will elevate our art must come from such men as Watts, Leighton, and Stevens, the remnant left in Israel, who alone know enough about their business to be able to produce ideal art.

Art is a perfect paradise for philosophers; unlike any other profession or business, any preliminary knowledge is quite unnecessary in those who profess to teach it. A little ingenuity will enable them to bring into every discussion the principles of "harmony," "truth," "beauty," and "the eternal laws of nature," while religion and even God himself are often pressed into their service.[1] Then the *corpus vile* on which they operate is delightfully sensitive, and neither our artists nor

[1] Nothing would better aid the cause of Art education than a general consensus that its principles were as independent of religion, sentiment and morality, as those of Music are luckily already held to be. Art is Christian, Pagan, anything, and is equally at home in the church, the temple, or the theatre. The odes of Sappho were no doubt finer as poems

the public are sufficiently educated to see how supremely ludicrous the whole business is. I would willingly have passed over in silence what, God help us! is called the philosophy of art, and have refrained from adding to the heap of rubbish, which I regard as the greatest nuisance of the age, were it not that, having watched its deadly effect, I should hardly be doing my duty if I did not at least attempt to provide some disinfectant which might render you safe from the worst symptoms of this pestilence, and put you in a position of tolerable safety.

Art can be viewed in so many aspects that we need not be surprised at the variety of opinions upon it, or that those opinions are expressed with a confidence in proportion to the narrowness of the view taken of it; it naturally is so, for a larger view alone reveals its difficulty; but it is impossible to trace the thread of error through the various opinions and theories of the day in one, two, or even a dozen lectures, and the attempt to do so would increase the very nuisance we wish to abate. These theories are for the most part the lucubrations of amateurs and critics, and even the best of them are of little practical use. We should remember, too, that a fool can state more fallacies in an hour than a wise man can refute in a week; but he would not be a wise man, and certainly not a wise artist, if he attempted to do so, for he would spend his time better in work, which, after all, is the best teacher; so, as a general rule, those who are the least worth hearing do all

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than the most pious of Dr. Watts's Hymns, perhaps even than some of the Psalms of David himself; and Michael Angelo's picture of Leda and the Swan in our National Gallery cellars, is altogether as fine in art as the religious pictures in the gallery above; it is, in fact, as free from these considerations as arithmetic or algebra are luckily admitted to be.

If our youth were bewildered by goody-goody speculations as to the comparative morality of the decimal or duodecimal systems of notation, we may be certain that their sums would not be any the more accurate for volumes of such irrelevant nonsense.

If we only sow the seed in a soil of liberty and truth it will need no such questionable manure as pious frauds. It is obvious that in so complicated and subtle a matter as Art, the more extraneous subjects can be eliminated the better.

the talking, and have it their own way, while those that are silent are the wisest, and the best worth hearing if they could be persuaded to speak, and we should treasure the short and pregnant remarks that may fall from the lips of a great artist, for they will be found of more use than whole pages of windy theories.

Nevertheless, these theories so encumber the threshold of art that it is necessary to clear away some of their sophistries, and I will, as far as possible, take a general survey of their tendencies, pointing out how partial and one-sided their teaching is.[1]

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[1] Dogmas are apt to ossify and impede the vital energy they are intended only to guide, and systems often deaden the spirit and create greater evils than they prevent. Every one who has had any experience in teaching art knows how difficult it is to tell anything with effect and yet without exaggeration, and I have often felt that it would have been much better to have said nothing, and let the student find out facts for himself, in his own way, by work. If, then, this is true of material facts, which are obvious and can be measured with the calipers, how much more likely are dogmas, which deal with intellectual subtleties, to lead the student into difficulties? for the exaggeration which they probably produce in his mind is not detected by the master in the way exaggeration of facts is sure to be in his work; for these reasons the greatest teachers have taught by parable rather than precept. Students, as well as masters, should fairly recognize these difficulties, and as far as possible guard against them.

But though I am deeply sensible of the evils of systems, and am most reluctant to add to the number of theories that already perplex the student, I find it is not only necessary to have a thread on which to string my beads—for my business is to teach, and, like any other business, it must be conducted with method and order;—but I am obliged to meet the heresies of the day with their own weapons. We seem to want a sort of Athanasian creed of art, not even omitting the damnatory clauses.

In teaching principles of art, we should not altogether ignore the fact that some are fitted for youth, and others for more advanced artists. A healthy intellect is not unlikely to progress through the whole scale of art. Modestly beginning with a suppression of his individuality, which he intuitively feels is neither definite nor powerful enough to influence his work for good, cultivating nature with devout reverence and patient imitation; then perhaps carried away by the fever of Ruskinism, and for some time delirious; then emerging from beautiful but bewildering labyrinths into the open plain of free and manly art; and finally, charged with knowledge and imbued with artistic power, he mounts to the ideal. We may even regard the minor heresies as intellectual measles or whooping-cough,

We have already seen that the general tendency of modern thought is towards realism ; but modern theories, as a rule, go farther, and entirely exclude the ideal, and art is taught as an imitation of nature alone, while criticism has become little more than a rigid comparison between the details of a picture and the details of nature.[1] If we trace these heresies to their root, we shall find it in the exclusion of man ; in the speculations of our philosopher the artist is altogether omitted. Now, art is not nature, but, as Emerson says, "it is nature passed through the alembic of man"—a sentence worth all Mr. Ruskin's philosophy ;—art is not a photograph, but a *man's* view of nature, and for this reason it enlists our human sympathies. It is not so much the imitation of nature as the expression of man, the Ideal is the very soul of art and its glory.

The perfect artist is a man who is in love with visible Nature, who studies and understands her aspects, assimilates them with his own nature, and reproduces them from his heart. He takes rank as an artist, not from his poetry, though that may be intimately connected with his art, not from his teaching, not from his sympathy with this or that human feeling, but from his ability to seize and render the aspects of nature with power and truth. Physical beauty is his own highest sphere, beauty of form, of colour, light and shade, and composition of line. He has a vivid apprehension of the exquisite gradation and subtle quality of nature, and this produces in his work similar qualities of his own. He assimilates most readily those phases of nature which are most in accordance with his own idiosyncrasy, so that art is as varied as the different temperaments of the artists, sometimes impetuous, sometimes gentle, sometime gorgeous, sometimes

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which, let us hope, may have some mysterious beneficial effect on the constitution, though I must confess I have never been able to trace any.

[1] Modern criticism, if listened to, will kill art. Just for one moment consider its effect on such men as Rubens or Rembrandt. If they had lived in these times, and been of a sensitive nature, they would have been written into imbecility. Those only are safe who have no individuality of their own.

quiet; but by this assimilation the poetic result is always harmonious; it is not so much an intellectual selection of facts or qualities as that the artist is involuntarily *en rapport* with those things congenial to his nature. The dwelling on certain aspects to the exclusion of others equally obvious, perhaps, to the generality of mankind, produces what the thoughtless call exaggeration, but what in reality is true to the artist's nature and to art. He will take the incidents of a story, and mould them in his own way; he will dispose his figures with dramatic emphasis and effect; light and shade and colour will not only be in accordance with the character and action of the scene, but will be so disposed as to cover the space ornamentally, and the first view of his picture before any subject is recognized, or even distinguishable, will reveal the artist's individuality and power. His work will always bear his stamp, and though details in it which he may never have noticed may be wrong, it will nevertheless have those grand characteristics which are the outcome of a noble nature and a large calibre of mind.[1]

Let us now consider the modern theories of art which are founded on realism.

Nature is regarded as too perfect to be mixed up with the human failings or caprices of the artist; if he has a proper reverence for her, he will be content to represent what he sees with pious elaboration, any tendency towards his own individuality is at once a proof of conceit in himself, of mannerism, exaggeration, and error in his work. He may, indeed, conceive or patiently think out how the incidents of such and such a scene occurred, but directly he admits in his mind the wish to compose, or in other words, to make a picture, he has fallen from the truth into a low, selfish and sensual view of his

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[1] Turner is perhaps the most splendid example of the true artistic temperament, and oddly enough his works are often quoted and appealed to as examples of pre-Raffaellite or imitative art. They are exactly the reverse, being, with few exceptions, the rendering of his *impressions*, and I very much doubt if Turner ever painted a picture (I do not mean a sketch) direct from nature.

SCALE

REALISTIC AND IMITATIVE POLE.

General Characteristics.

Literal statement of facts.
Detail and attention to minutiæ and their individual truth.
Native or assumed ignorance of principles.
No composition.

Position of Schools.

Modern art.

F

Dutch.

Pre-Raffaelite.

Principle of Light and Shade.

No system; effect generally petty, hard, spotty.

High lights sparkling but spotty; breadth gives way to detail; illusive and imitative motive.

Shadov and more t lights foc brought up into the sh ciple of c founded o resque arra focussed li

Everything and anything.

Colour.

Tendency to be poor. Accidental and staring.

True and natty.

Transparent.

Form.

Commonplace and petty; much cut up by detail.

Ordinary nature.

Gre fc b

Material and Size.

Finished surface.
Any material that is smooth and neat.
Small.

Neat.

Ri More an

Architecture.

Utilitarian motive.
Exhibition of real construction.
Economy of material.
Detail.

Complexity.

Picturesque effect.
Arches larger and larger, supports
Surface more and more cut up
architecturally solid, a

Crystal Palace.

Perpendicular.

Decorated.

Ornament.

Naturalistic; wanting in symmetry and firmness.

A more pictorial treatm resque effect, and less a herence to ornamental

N.B.—The gradation of qualiti

-E OF ART.

IDEAL AND CONVENTIONAL POLE.

:ruth.	Artistic conception of subject. General truth, simplicity, and breadth. Knowledge of the principles of nature and art.
Picturesque composition.	Severe composition.

Cinque-cento Art.

Florentine and Roman.

Venetian.

Flemish.

ıadow darker nore transparent; s focussed, and ght up with force the shadow; prin- of composition ded on a pictu- ıe arrangement of ısed lights.	Shadows darker; lights more luminous, giving an effect of force and clearness; but surface is not so evenly or ornamentally covered.	Broad simple shadow melting into the light, so that the unity of the object is not destroyed; composition evenly distributed.	Flat, severe, with little or no attempt at shade or roundness.
rent.	Rich and forcible.	Luminous, clear.	Grave and opaque.	Flat, barbaric.
	Greater complexity and detail; form, though fine, is hid by draperies.	Great attention to form; breadth; masses not cut up.	Conventional; sometimes grotesque.
	Rich in surface and quality. ıre and more transparent varnish or oil. Medium.	Even, but granulated. Fresco; distemper; mosaic.	Rough. Large.
		Æsthetic motive. Self-imposed law of imaginary construction. Profusion of material. Mass.	
t.	Variety.	Symmetry.	Simplicity.
ports less.	Arched.	Trabeated.	Solid.
ut up into panels, the styles alone being lid, and their surfaces essential.		Solidity, with surface architecturally essential.	
E. English.	Palladian. Norman.	Roman. Romanesque.	Greek.	Egyptian.
atment; pictu- ess and less ad- ntal principles.	Evenly distributed; but with recession of background; variety subordinated to symmetry.	Conventional; flat; plain; severe; symmetrical; evenly distributed; without recession of background.

ıalities is to be read from right to left.

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art. His business is to tell the story exactly as it occurred, any obtrusion of himself or his art is an impertinence.

These are the two theories of art. They occupy two opposite poles, and between them all art vibrates, on one side the real, on the other the ideal; as this prevails that wanes, and each quality of art ranges itself naturally on one side or the other. On this an ascetic denial of self, and a patient elaboration of detail, a careful statement of facts or incidents with an innocent or contemptuous ignorance of those qualities which may be called artificial; on that a strong individuality, a generalization of facts and form, a dramatic and pictorial motive, a profound knowledge of the science of art. On this side, simple faith; on that, conscious power.

A system founded on the frank acceptance of these two opposite principles of art, and the several qualities appertaining to each, will furnish us with the key to all our difficulties. It presents at one view the whole scheme of art. It is the solution of its history, and explains its harmony at any one period. It will prove an antidote to the theories of the day, and while it accepts the residuum of truth at the bottom of every heresy, it will destroy the influence of charlatans. It is a sure guide to all the difficulties of education, and points out the only road to greatness. It shows the necessity of the science of art, and is the basis on which its true order rests. It reunites the various branches of art which are now severed, and gives its proper place to ornament. In order to fix this scheme in your memory, and also that we may the more readily refer to it in future lectures, I have constructed the accompanying diagram. (*See diagram* on last page.)

You will notice that the general tendency of old, or cinquecento art is towards the ideal pole; of modern art towards the imitative pole. Antique art, as far as we know, was also ideal. Sculpture is so necessarily, for a high degree of generalization can alone elevate it from the commonplace; and the feebleness of modern sculpture is more generally shown in empty flaccid form, than by an over elaboration of detail. In the gradual progress from ideal to imitative art, which we may trace historically in nearly all its phases, we shall

always find Sculpture lagging behind, reluctantly leaving the field in which alone its capacities and qualities can be developed; and the same tendency is more obvious still in architecture, which is necessarily non-imitative. Architecture seems to go through a regular graduation of changes from æsthetic to utilitarian principles; from principles founded upon self-imposed laws of imaginary construction, to those founded on the necessities of actual construction, the prevailing feature of the first being profusion, of the second economy of material; the one being concomitant and co-temporaneous with ideal painting, the other with imitative painting. The principle of the civil engineer, which unfortunately so much influences the art of our own day, is to use as little material as possible, while the architect uses mass as an element of expression. In tracing the progress of art, and I presume in any other study, nothing excites one's astonishment so much as the extraordinary harmony of its different qualities and developments at any one period. This order seems eminently natural, and at the same time profoundly subtle, it is so simple and complete, and at the same time so complex, intricate and interdependent, that the want of any one element, often apparently accidental, would destroy the harmony and effect of the whole; social, political, and physical agencies seem always exactly in accord with the æsthetic feeling and power of the artists of the time, and even with the materials in which they worked. These considerations often lead me to think that good art is entirely intuitive; that to teach it is not only a waste of time, but not improbably injurious to its spontaneous growth and development; that if it were only left alone, our art would be an exact reflection of the age, and if it were possible to influence it, we should only change it from natural to artificial, we should only be cultivating, at a great expense of time and labour, an exotic which had no real place in the country, and in no way illustrated its climate and surroundings. If these then are my opinions, it may be asked, "Why say anything?" to which I answer, If modern theories which seem to me so disastrous to art, are a phase of modern thought, am not I also a modern, and should not I, holding the opinions I do,

be guilty of culpable apathy if I refrained from shouting out as loudly as I could, "Come back to the old paths?" The pendulum seems to have almost kicked the beam of imitation, it is impossible for art to be less ideal than it is. Is not a reaction against Realism natural, and to be expected? and the result will, I hope, prove that I am more in harmony with the age, than those who differ from me.

There are many reasons for concluding that art must now be necessarily eclectic; if so, it must cease to be spontaneous, and must needs be the studied result of intellect, taste, and learning; at all events, the revival of cinque-cento art cannot be more artificial than that of Gothic, and I cannot be wrong in pointing out its order, refinement, and beauty, and comparing it with styles, which according to some have a patent for all the virtues, and are alone "Christian and true."

But to return to Architecture, nothing is more instructive than to watch the gradual change from the Roman to Gothic, and its different phases; all these changes are perfectly natural, they may be said to have been almost dictated by necessity. Each is a development of a former style, a disintegration, a breaking up into smaller parts, an economizing of material; but when we see clearly all this, we cannot but ask ourselves is this process good, is disintegration a good principle in art? is economy of material æsthetically good? Now, though we cannot but admire the splendid results of the Gothic system, I am compelled to answer, No. It is not my intention to rush into the battle of the styles, but rather to state clearly the different principles and qualities which belong to each. When the province of each is clearly defined and understood, there surely ought to be no further need of fighting.

Let us briefly note the order of the changes in architecture. Beginning with Egyptian, simplicity and mass were at first entirely predominant, buildings were almost solid, temples were hewn out of the rock, or built to appear so, economy was thousands of years distant, and ornament, if admitted at all, was entirely flat and conventional, but architecture became gradually more slender and ornate, although, compared with subsequent styles, still pre-eminently massive

and at length, in the hands of the Greeks, changed into a style of greater elegance and refinement, but still stable, firm, and severe; it had the perfect repose of a system which contains within itself no element of destruction, it was complete, simple, integrate, but there was necessarily a limit to its size. The Greeks were in all things moderate, their country and numbers were moderate, there is a moderation, a refined reticence in their work: their architecture could hardly have been possible, it certainly would not have been appropriate, under other conditions; trabeated architecture cannot be magnified, for stone beams cannot be found of sufficient strength and size; their temples and buildings were big enough for the Greeks, but not for the Romans, and bridging over larger spaces made the arch a necessity, for without it, architecture could not have continued its use.[1] The arch once admitted, it is interesting to watch the gradual way in which it destroys the members of the old style, hard to die though they be. Let us, for instance, take the column and cornice. Permitted for some time to share the honours, if not the real power, on equal terms with the arch, the balance between them remained for some time apparently pretty even, and though it may be said that the column and cornice were ornamental, or were only allowed such occupation as might excuse their existence, they had the prestige of antiquity, and contributed to the strength, state, and splendour of the building; but when the arch had greater use in vaulting, when vaulting turned, as it were, buildings outside in, and above all, when greater economy was felt to be necessary, those parts of the building which did the work began to assert themselves, and the royal family of column and cornice, not only lost the pretence of occupation, but was shorn of its splendour; it no longer remained united, but was cut up into parts, each with its capital, but the cornice no longer crowned it. Stripped of its ornament, it was pushed out of the way, and becoming less and less respected, its existence at last was only marked by

[1] It is not sufficiently considered, that iron now does away with the necessity of the arch.

an insignificant stringcourse running above the arches, which had gradually subverted its power.

The column was more fortunate, and being found useful under the new order of things, it went through a series of modifications, and was finally absorbed in the pier. The capital shared the fate of the column, became less and less important, but instead of being absorbed, disappeared altogether; and the continuation of the mouldings of the arch down the sides of the pier, without anything to indicate the spring of the arch, marks at once the last phase of Gothic, and the complete obliteration of the vestiges of a former style. Now, mark how every step in the process was from unity to disintegration, from mass to detail, from æsthetic to utilitarian construction. Economy led to the openings exceeding the mass; material became more and more drawn out and attenuated; arches and windows became larger and larger.[1]

Similar changes are obvious in painting. We can trace the same steps, though their chronological sequence may not be so continuous as in architecture. Mass is abandoned for detail, severity for picturesque effect, breadth and simplicity for brilliancy and force. Each change is not only excusable, but it is natural, for it is the development of some principle of nature, and the source of new beauty. It is nevertheless a falling away from the noblest style of art.

Beginning with barbaric and grotesque, but severe and impressive Mosaics, which were flat conventional diagrams, rather than any imitation of nature, we by degrees come to more perfect art, the severity of which is in no way owing to want of knowledge or skill; its qualities are selected by unerring intuition, or the most profound judgment; everything is broad, simple, severe, ideal. Mass is not cut up by detail, colour does not interfere with form by a too obtrusive brilliancy, shadow is sufficent to display form and make the

[1] The Crystal Palace is nothing but an extravagant development of Gothic principles. It is interesting to watch the most thoughtful of the Goths beginning silently, but not unnoticed, to retrace their steps. We cannot expect them to be renegades, but their leaning to greater simplicity and mass is a most favourable omen.

lights luminous without producing a contrast which might interfere with the majestic uniformity of the whole composition. This art has all the great essentials of mural decoration, and is large in scale; it lies close to the ideal pole of our diagram, and all the rules of decorative art have here their fullest force. Such is the finest art of the Roman and Florentine schools: but complete in ther own style, and in every way admirable though they were, it is obvious that many qualities of nature, and those perhaps the most brilliant and seductive, had no place in them, and the progress of art towards greater force, brilliancy and complexity commands our sympathies; lights become brighter by contrast with darker shadows, darker shadows require transparency, transparency a smoother surface and finish, which invites and produces a greater attention to realism. The light which before bathed the larger art became more limited, local, and intense.

The Venetians seem to have combined as many of the greatest qualities of art as were compatible with their opposing natures. Focussing was not carried to a point which would have destroyed the decorative distribution of the subject. Though splendid, transparent, and gorgeous in colour, their art still remained large. It was large, too, in scale. It was not unfitted for walls; the lesser qualities of art which are more fitted for easel pictures had not as yet the predominance; though their work was the most perfect rendering of nature, it was of its larger qualities. It was focussing which first rendered it impossible to incorporate in the new system the greater qualities of the older art. It is essentially at variance with the principles of mural decoration, for it destroyed the surface, or the apparent solidity of the wall.

Yet the principle of focussing achieved a series of triumphs in painting not less brilliant than those of the Gothic principle in architecture; and detail which interfered with the breadth and finish which would have destroyed the effect of larger work which was to be viewed from a distance, was welcomed with pleasure in pictures which were close to the eye. The smaller the work the more are we pleased with realism and the minutest detail, and Dutch art seems to have carried to its

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highest legitimate conclusion the artistic rendering of the ordinary incidents of life.[1] Thus do we descend in natural sequence through all the qualities of art. We go through precisely the same phases that we did in architecture, from simplicity, breadth, and largeness both of style and material, to complexity, disintegration, detail, realism, and finish, and it is not only in the great divisions of painting and architecture that this degradation is to be detected. All the subordinate branches of art go through similar phases. In pottery, for instance, we not only note the same changes in the art as a whole, changes from Hispano—Moresque to Majolica, from Majolica through several steps to the more finished but meretricious Sèvres, but each new style has its own successive epochs ; and we may see the same order in Nature herself. In youth a cheek or an eye is, we may say, treated as a whole, which in after years becomes cut up into parts and marked by details which more and more exhibit the construction, and the higher the rank of any organism, the more grand and simple is its form, and the more concealed its mechanism. The contours of the human figure are round, massive, firm. The word "full" perhaps best expresses their quality. The body itself and each limb is as far possible treated as a whole ; though in reality containing machinery the most intricate and subtle of all, there is no external indication of it ; but the general aspect of the lower types of life is angular, minute, and intricate, owing to the multiplication of their parts and the obvious exhibition of their organs and mechanical structure. The beauty of one is of an entirely different sort to the beauty of the other ; the first belongs to the right hand of our scale, the other to the left.

A complete comprehension of the whole scale of art, so arranged, will luckily render it unnecessary to go into the various theories of the day. We are here to study *ornamental* art, and so our position and our wants are tolerably clearly

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[1] If we look through a magnifying glass at our fingers, we see with astonishment a style finer than that of Michael Angelo or Phidias ; while seen through a diminishing glass, objects have a limpidity and neatness unequalled by Van Eyck himself ; the one view exhibits all the qualities of great art, the other the picturesque sparkle of detail.

defined. We need not waste our time in running up and down the scale of art, not knowing exactly where to rest; we can at once lay our finger on those qualities of art which will be of use to us; we know what we have got to learn, and need not trouble ourselves with the lucubrations of the critics. If, however, any particular philosopher should force himself on our notice, we have only mentally to put him down in his proper place in our scale, and we know very well where that is, and what even his unexpressed opinions are (for there is a harmony in any one's opinions at any given time); but I would give you one caution, never let yourselves be drawn even mentally into any abstract disquisition as to whether this or that phase of art is of itself true or false. You will only waste time in such endless and unprofitable subjects as these. If a pre-Raffaelite says his system is true, and all others false, you have only to classify him, and you at once see that he will be of no use to us who work on totally different principles.

I shall from time to time notice some of the most obtrusive heresies of the day, but I shall do so in order to illustrate and confirm a system in which I am confident you will find the solution of all theoretical difficulties, while its practical use will gradually unfold itself before you. I can at present do little more than state it; but in future lectures I shall show how all the qualities of art, the various treatment of shadow and form, and even the size of pictures and materials, range themselves in natural order in the scale of art.

But with regard to modern theories of art there is one thing which I should like you to observe, and that is, that almost all of them can be traced to one root, namely, *the denial or ignoring* of the supremacy, I had almost said the divinity, of man. As we have already seen, man is excluded in the modern speculations on art. All is reverenced as nature except man, who is its crowning glory. His ideas are treated as eminently unnatural, and in every way to be mistrusted.

The relation of man to nature is a subject so vast and so obscure that a philosopher may state anything he chooses about it, and can easily escape into clouds and darkness; but

as far as these heresies affect art, it is a remarkable fact, as interesting as it is fortunate, that the study of the human figure will provide their antidote.

The pre-Raffaelites, "true principle" men, and modern Goths, have an intuitive perception of this, and it is only natural that they should oppose a study which will infallibly annihilate them. The process gone through in one's own mind will certainly repeat itself on a larger scale, and the modern theories of art will inevitably fall before a systematic study of the divine and all-comprehensive form of man.[1]

From a consideration of the diagram it will be seen that while neither knowledge nor the science of art are essential to the patient imitation of nature, it is impossible to carry out the practice of ideal art without the attainment of both to a degree which increases, as we more nearly approach the opposite pole. If you consider the practical carrying out of the two methods of art, *viz.*, the imitative and the ideal, you will at once understand all their difference. To produce imitative art nothing is required but patience. A greater or less degree of executive power will affect the time taken in its production rather than its final result. If your patience is unlimited, and the thing represented will remain long enough, there is no reason why you should despair of eventual success; for this sort of work knowledge is not only unnecessary, but is to be deprecated; it will not alter the appearance of the object, and that is all that should concern you, while it might lead you astray, and tempt you to deviate from particular truth; and if you are painting from a model, you should adhere literally to all its individual details.

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[1] If Mr. Ruskin should ever devote his serious attention to the study of the Figure, I have no hesitation in saying his views on art would be entirely changed; his descriptions of nature are magnificent; I wish his theories were no worse than bewildering. At present all one side of art, and that the greatest, is, from an artist's point of view, almost a sealed book to him, and I cannot but hope that the day will come when it will be considered a presumptuous thing for a man to pretend to teach artists their business without knowing anything of the Figure, which alone contains all the principles of Art.

But if you want to paint an ideal subject, and are wicked enough to wish to compose a fine picture, you are at once involved in all the difficulties of art. You must take care that the lines compose well, that masses of light and shade are properly placed, that the colour is harmonious, and that all these things are treated in character with the subject, and fill the canvas ornamentally. If you paint from a model, you will find that the meanness of ordinary nature does not express what you intend; instead of some hero, your figure provokingly persists in looking like Smith (why it should not it is perhaps difficult to say), and you will find that generalization is as absolutely necessary in art as it is in poetry.

Say, for instance, you have an idea of a figure reposing in contemplation, see what difficulties you at once get into if you are not master of your art, and attempt to proceed on the imitative method. The difficulty of finding a graceful model is enormous; he is almost as difficult to arrange as a lay figure; he is so obstinate, that you are almost persuaded your idea must be impossible to realize, and you are tempted to change it to some accidental attitude which takes your fancy (of which, by the bye, at once make a sketch); but when at last you think you have caught him, you find that some slight alteration, which copying him has entailed, has prevented the figure composing in line with another part of your picture. But all this is nothing compared with the expression of the face; here you are driven to despair. A little practice of this sort will drive you either into imitative art, or to follow the sensible example of the old masters, who were unceasingly studying from nature, but painted the actual pictures without it. They adhered to their idea; they studied nature to supply gaps in their knowledge, but the result was, as Emerson says, "nature passed through the alembic of man." And here I must caution you not to be confounded or dismayed by the universal criticisms of the day, which have actually terrified most artists into being ashamed of admitting that they have done any of their work without copying it immediately from nature. How constantly you hear men tell you that they shall have nature for every bit of their work. as if that were

a credit to them; or they will justify any objectionable or obtrusive detail by saying it was so in the model, and be perfectly satisfied.

Throw all this nonsense boldly to the winds, for it is this which is the ruin of art. Study nature so completely that you master her principles, and then you will be free from all the difficulties that arise from the individuality and detail of the model. If you make mistakes, it is no proof that your system is wrong, but merely that your knowledge is incomplete. It may be necessary at first, and perhaps prudent always, as far as possible, to pose models in the position you want, that you may be able at once to correct any faulty details, and at the same time be adding to your stock of knowledge; but except where accuracy of detail adds to the beauty of the work, as, for instance, in the brilliant lights on satin or on objects whose complexity and comparative insignificance combine to make a systematic study of them a waste of time, paint the actual picture as much as possible out of your head; it will not only the better express your idea, but there will be a harmony and unity about it very difficult to attain by any other means. The more naturalistic a subject and the smaller the picture, the more is the attention directed to detail, and the more necessary is it that it should be painted from nature; but ideal art ought not and cannot be so treated.

The range of art may also be considered as vibrating between simple imitation and decorative art pure and simple. On one hand the representation of facts, or subject, being the purpose; on the other the covering a given space beautifully; and the union of these two is the finest art, for a space is not less beautifully filled because a story is at the same time told on it; neither is a story less pathetic because it is told beautifully. The spandrils of Michael Angelo, and, I may add, the Rape of Proserpine, by Stevens, are examples of both qualities of art. It is no mere accident that decorative and ideal art have always flourished together; for the same technical knowledge is necessary to both. As we proceed we shall see that the greatest artists were the greatest ornamentists.

LECTURE III.

ON EDUCATION.

HAVING compared the physical and social aspects of mediæval Italy and modern England, and touched upon those theories which principally afflict us, prescribing as far as possible their proper remedies, we will proceed on the same method to consider the difference between the education which brought out the inherent qualities of the great men of old, and that which in our own day, though long and laborious, fails to elicit the conception and imagination or to convey the executive power which are necessary to the production of the nobler qualities of art.

Let us begin with the old, and trace the career of a young man who had what is called a natural turn for art. After the usual preliminary difficulties, for even then there was a prudent mistrust of art as a profession, the father consented to his son following it, and looked about for some one to instruct him in his business, and this was not more difficult than it would be in the present day to apprentice a boy to a shoemaker; indeed it was less difficult. The boy had, probably, already imbibed his love for art, by seeing the works of a fellow citizen who had, perhaps, just completed some great altarpiece, the talk and admiration of the town; his ambition was excited, but what is more to the point, his aspirations were

defined. He wished to paint like that man. He may have heard rumours of other painters in other towns, but this was enough for him. He was not troubled, as we are, by long lists of the various schools of art; he did not know too much. His desires and his knowledge combined to make him entirely content to become the pupil of that man, and so he was articled as an apprentice to learn the business of art, just as we should be to learn any regular business now; and he had not only to learn, but to assist; he had to grind colours, prepare canvas and panels, and lay in flat tints, and thus was thoroughly grounded in those essential, but too much neglected, details; and all this time he was not only learning to draw, but saw the work of the studio progressing, could watch with eager emulation every process of his master, and every day felt and supplied deficiencies in his own executive power. In every respect he had the enormous advantage of *direction.* He, and his master as well, had a perfectly definite idea as to what he wanted to do; the particular branch of art, its very qualities, and the sort of subject to be painted were all settled; and besides all this, it was as much to the master's advantage as to the pupils that he should acquire the technicalities of his art as rapidly as possible, for the pupil was bound to work for his master for a definite period.

The number of pupils was necessarily limited; the master would receive only as many as he could conveniently instruct and employ, and thus his attention was concentrated on them; they had the full benefit of his personal instruction; and it cannot be sufficiently insisted upon that it is only by direct personal infusion that any real knowledge of art can be imparted. No mere system, however elaborate, can play the part of the "imposition of hands;" and this limiting the number of pupils excluded that frivolous dilettante element which is the curse of our own time; the few there were were serious, and eager to acquire all the knowledge they could.

The pupil had as soon as possible to take his share in responsible work. The educational advantage of this is of itself enormous. But not only this, the work was done under the eye of the master, and if not executed in a thoroughly work-

manlike manner, it had to be done again; everything turned out of the studio was finished in a perfectly business-like way. A painter no more thought of turning out a picture all daubs, stains, obvious erasures, and corrections, than a tailor would now think of sending home a pair of trousers with the seams all cobbled up on the outside; and thus an artist was not his own master before he had thoroughly acquired a perfect method of execution; in short, he had the inestimable advantage of being obliged to learn his business.

This exact knowledge of the processes of art, this perfect mastery of his craft enabled him in his turn to instruct his own pupils with ease and confidence, so that the energy which was necessary for work was not wasted in instruction; but, on the contrary, the necessity of teaching entailed a still greater exactitude, which added to rather than detracted from the master's power; but now few artists know enough of their bnsiness to teach it, and the attention which it would be necessary to devote to pupils would paralyze their energies. They would find even their presence an intolerable burden. Their knowledge of processes is so vague, their execution so feeble, that they would hardly like a student to watch their tentative and laborious efforts; but the fact is, in imitative art instruction is not necessary in the way it is in ideal art, which requires all the resources of science, and a perfect mastery of all executive processes.

The practice of fresco painting necessitated not only a precision and readiness of execution, but that knowledge of form and the principles of light and shade which is essential in ideal art. In the execution of a fresco the imitative method was luckily impossible, and thus was engendered and stimulated the very power which was necessary to the conception and treatment of such subjects as were proper for mural decoration.

The artistic range of the old men, moreover, was not limited so entirely to one branch of art as it is in our own day. Even if the painter were not himself a modeller or an architect, his work was sure to bring him into direct personal relations with men engaged in every branch of art; the architect, the painter,

and the sculptor could not fail to meet in the same glorious cause: the making as splendid as they could some great temple of God. They worked together in unison, not, it is true, without occasional jealousies and bickerings, but understanding and appreciating each other's work; and so every branch of art was mutually benefited, for every man acquired a broader and deeper knowledge than would have been possible if his attention had been isolated in his own speciality.

Thus we see how all the circumstances, or accidents if you like to call them so, of the art of those days acted and re-acted in developing and perfecting the qualities necessary to its production, and the more we consider the apprentice method the more we shall feel that it is hardly possible to devise anything better. It combined the advantages of direction; definite and exact instruction; early initiation not only in all the mysteries of the craft, but in responsible work; the emulation of the student was stimulated, while at the same time he saw carried out before him those very processes, and that very knowledge practically illustrated in which he might feel himself deficient, and hasten by those means to acquire; he was every day brought into personal contact with men engaged in every branch of art, his conception of the scheme of art was not narrowed or isolated; and when he in turn became a master himself, the practice of teaching his pupils still further defined, confirmed, and strengthened his knowledge; adding, perhaps, somewhat to what his master had taught, himself one link in the chain of tradition, he helped to hand on and perpetuate a thorough practical knowledge of all the science of art. The links of this chain were necessarily great men, for it was only to them that the more promising pupils would go, and thus art education was in the hands of men of eminence and practical power; and not, as in our own day, in the hands of mediocrities, theorists, and amateurs.

As our subject is to consider the difference between old and modern education, we may proceed at once to notice the *Academic* system, for though schools of art existed in the middle ages, they were as exceptional then as the old system

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is now with us, the number of artists who take pupils being scarcely appreciable;[1] so that we may broadly accept the apprentice system as the old method, the academic as the new. I will for the present pass over the French ateliers, which seem to combine some of the advantages of both systems, and will briefly describe the ordinary educational career of an artist of our own time and country.

We will suppose that he has shown a natural capacity for art, that he has a love, an appreciation of nature, that he is fond of pictures, and wishes to become a painter. The diffusion of illustrated books and photographs stimulates his emulation, and affords him plenty of material for copying; but even at this early stage the profusion and variety of examples has its evil as well as good, and it is difficult in the present day to find a young man who is able to define the sort of art he wishes to pursue; he has often a vague notion that that will be done for him. He feels his deficiency in knowledge and execution, and joins some school where he may be taught to produce such works as are necessary to admit him as a probationer at the Royal Academy, which he at length enters with the proud consciousness that he is now on the King's High Road to art, and begins a course of instruction which he fondly believes will in a given time turn him out an accomplished artist; for are not all his studies arranged and presided over by the most eminent men of the day? to doubt their efficacy would be presumptuous. He produces a series of carefully shaded drawings from the antique. He attends lectures on perspective and anatomy, and is in due course admitted to the painting school, and to study from the life. Now, this is all very well, but where is the *direction?* the active, interested, and constant supervision and instruction? where the example which is even more cogent than precept? How seldom are the reasons of things explained, and those great principles of nature and art held up for the constant guidance of the student; and how very rarely, if ever, has he

[1] See Wornum's Introduction to "Lectures on Painting by the Royal Academicians."

the opportunity of seeing any work of art in progress? Left for the most part to himself, his work is necessarily merely imitative. He executes his drawings as a task from which he fondly believes he is deriving some mysterious benefit; and where there are many students these tasks are almost a necessity, for it would be impossible for the master to give a more direct personal attention to them all: if he did so, it would take up so much of his time and energy that he would have little left for his own work, and sinking to the level of a mere drawing master, he would lose the influence which he might otherwise have as an able artist; no mere system can ever supply his place; it may perhaps teach the veriest rudiments of art; but it is only by direct personal influence that any benefit can be conferred on a student, and it is this alone that is really meant by education. If it is sufficient to turn a student into a room full of casts and examples, all we want is an attendant, and not a master; and it is by no means certain that this would not be altogether better than having a bad one.

Modern theories and the imitative tendencies of the age have bent art education entirely in one direction, but in no particular has their effect been more baneful than in the style of drawing which is now almost universal. There is, I believe, more time, patience, and labour wasted in the elaborate and stippled copies of the antique, than in any business in the world. Indeed, it is worse than wasted, for the poor student fancies that he is all the time very industrious, and is making great progress in art; but the truth is, that he is deceiving himself, and weakening every day his power of intellectual effort. I know from experience how seldom this elaborate stippling impresses the least knowledge of form on the memory; I have over and over again found the authors of the most wonderful drawings wholly ignorant of any one detail of the figures over which they have spent so many months. They have manufactured drawings, but they have not learnt to draw. Their attention and energies seem so entirely absorbed in "breading out" spots in their shadows, that it never seems to occur to them to take any notice of proportion or form. Now,

I do not say that no student ever got any good from this sort of drawing, but I do say that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a student learns no more of the object he wastes so much time over than he would by copying a map of England, or any wholly meaningless combination of lines. It is done as a task: he plumbs, measures, maps out, and corrects, till, after infinite pains, he has got a tolerably accurate outline; the shadow is mapped out in the same way, and is executed by a process not unlike cross-stitch. Indeed, it has often occurred to me that ladies, and some men as well, had better do their studies in lambswool; they would get as good a texture as they usually do in chalk, and there would no doubt, in vulgar houses, be a great demand for their work as anti-macassars.

So long as the walls of all the academies and schools in England are once a year hung with these stippled manufactures, and the public, ignorant of the unprofitable labour spent upon them, applauds, the present system of education will be considered a success, and the progress we make in art will be measured by the number of works exhibited. If in the present year there are ten thousand of these drawings, while ten years ago, sad to say! there were only one thousand, it is statistically obvious that the country is advancing, with positively terrific strides, to true excellence: but what is statistically obvious is unfortunately not true; the educational is little better than the marketable value of these drawings; the best out of twenty thousand drawings would not fetch five shillings at Christie's, and no one but a paper-maker would give ten pounds for the whole lot. Though we have thousands of drawings made every year, at the present moment there are not ten men in all England who can draw; but when we turn back to the days of Italian art, we are astounded at the profusion of the power displayed. It is not only the great men who can draw; everyone could draw. Look at the innumerable sketches for the decoration of buildings, vases, armour, and so forth. We have figures in every conceivable attitude, put in with a freedom and style incomparably finer than even our best artists can achieve after many plodding hours of hopeless

blunderings. One or two trials will more than ever convince our artists of the peculiar sourness of this sort of grape.

One would suppose that the natural course to take, if we desired to attain to similar results, would be to set about it in a similar way; but philosophers have decreed otherwise, and though volume upon volume of photographs of original drawings by the old masters, executed from an entirely different motive, crowd our libraries, our present mindless, laborious, hopeless system is still rigidly adhered to. Objections to this system are generally met by dwelling on the advantages of working with the point, an advantage which I altogether deny in this sort of drawing; a brush is a much better instrument for gradation of tone, and there would be some sense in exercising the student in the use of it. It is not for these modern, worthless, husky attempts at imitation, but for real manly drawing, that the point is invaluable for firmly defining the outline, for registering and expressing the form. There are two sorts of drawing—the simple imitation of nature, and the expression of knowledge. Mulready's drawings may be considered as a type of the first, Michael Angelo's of the second. The first is a laborious achievement, the second is educational; and even where done with an imitative motive, it is not so much a direct transcript from the object as it is a putting down the impressions which that object produces or recalls. It does not pretend to be an illusive imitation, it is an expression of a knowledge of the facts which the artist sees. Mulready laboriously tries to imitate the facts; Michael Angelo puts down a vigorous cipher, which represents to himself and others the very essence of them. If Mulready had, by any accident, drawn a vigorous line, he would infallibly have had to rub it out again. Educational drawing should be looked upon as the putting on paper the knowledge of facts and form, every line should be an attempt to fix and record the result of intellectual effort and comprehension. Masterly drawing is the result of knowledge, not of imitation, and all education which fails to impart knowledge is worthless. It seems to have altogether escaped the notice of our instructors that the duration of the life of man is limited; if Methuselah

had had a very great natural aptitude for art, he might have made something of our present system—for post-diluvians it is a failure, and it is lamentable to see students taking months to acquire knowledge which by another method could easily be imparted in a week. *Ars longa, vita brevis est*, and that system is the best by which the student acquires and retains the greatest knowledge in the shortest time. Let him follow the method of the old masters, let him fill note-books with accurate records of his observations, let him study nature to acquire facts and principles and put down what suffices to recall them, let him moreover write descriptions as much as he draws, and he will find that, even unaided by a master, he will have spent his time well. He must not neglect imitative work, but it should, as far as possible, be done in the style and material which he proposes to adopt in his future profession. Common sense should tell us that the style and quality of drawing should depend on the time we can afford to spend over it, as well as on the object for which it is done. We should often ask ourselves, "For what purpose am I drawing this?" If it is because the light and shade are beautiful, then devote your energies to rendering the chiaro-scuro; if the anatomy is clearly marked in the model, make that your principal study; if the gradation of tone and colour strikes you as beautiful, make, as well as you are able, an imitative painting of it; but do not attempt to do everything —you will only tumble between two stools, and your work will be wholly ineffective and probably worthless.

The all-pervading influence of imitative art, and the suppression of all academic knowledge, is nothing less than a national disaster. That the feeble should attempt to persuade others as well as themselves that any exhibition of power is in exceedingly bad taste, and that critics should prove that everything beyond their own knowledge is false, is perhaps natural, and certainly amusing; but it is a little beyond a joke when a whole people is compelled to go on their hands and knees because half a dozen men two or three centuries ago ran so fast that they tumbled over a precipice. To the suppression of the natural capacities and aspirations of our artists can alone be

attributed the apathy with which the flood of magnificent art, poured out by photography, is received. The photographs from the Sistine Chapel, and of drawings by Michael Angelo and Raphael, are nothing less than a splendid revelation, which, in any other age or country, would have produced a revolution in education and in art; but such is our general ignorance, that even our artists remain unmoved, while critics continue to lay down their little laws, unabashed by the presence of majestic genius. Their constant exhortations to eschew academic knowledge, their repeated cautions against the dangers, not only of mannerism, but of style, are scarcely well timed in an age when the very rudiments of knowledge can scarcely be said to exist; they are prescribing remedies for superfœtation before the tree has begun to put forth buds; and if it were not that critics, like angels, belong to no country, and cannot be trammelled by any such mean considerations as national prosperity or splendour, we might urge upon them the prudence of attempting to counteract the universal tendency to petty realism; but it is well known that nothing will ever tempt a critic to deviate from "truth," the trade name for his own opinions.

Another evil of the academic system is that a number of youths are congregated together without the controlling influence of older and better informed men, and so the disturbing and injurious effects of modern theories are aggravated by endless and useless discussions among themselves. In short, in such a chaotic crowd of crude opinions, it is almost impossible for a student to have a definite aim; he hardly even knows which of the schools he prefers, much less is he able to mark out for himself a definite course; neither can this be done for him; the very constitution of an academy such as ours almost forbids a leaning to any particular style, while a general, colourless, eclectic system of art, however well balanced it may be, is sure to be wanting, with teachers as well as students, in that eager enthusiasm which is almost necessary to success. As regards painting, the remedy for this defect has been sought in the personal teaching of the Academicians who take their turn as visitors to the schools, but this only adds a

disturbing element for the already perplexed student; one man tells him that all methods are nonsense, that he must paint as well as he can what he sees before him; while another persuades him to adopt a method which he is certain is identical with that of the Venetians; one advocates the use of solid opaque colour, and is succeeded the next week by another who is enthusiastic about glazes. What wonder is it then that the Academic system is so long, laborious, and inefficient? How can it possibly convey that mastery of execution, that exact knowledge of principles, which are essential to the production of ideal art? Founded to promote the science of art, it wholly fails to hand down those traditions which in former times tended to produce such glorious results, and everyone has now pretty much to learn art for himself from the very beginning. When an artist has acquired his knowledge by tedious research and personal experience, he does not willingly throw his pearls broadcast among a crowd of students in whom he has no personal interest, so that it is to be feared that the present perfunctory system is likely to continue. Neither does the Academy afford the natural advantage of a common ground on which the students and professors of the various branches of art can meet; for every day, both in teaching and practice, they seem more and more isolated, while the intimate connection of all the arts, if not altogether ignored, is never explained and insisted upon.

It is really a relief to be able to mention even one advantage of academies. In what we may call the plant of a school, no private artist can for a moment compete with them. In their rooms for study, the number and excellence of the casts and examples, in their libraries, and I may add, in the lectures by eminent men, they afford advantages to the student which he could never hope for as a private pupil.

After this recapitulation of the shortcomings of academies, it is little to be wondered at that they should sink into mere corporations of painters, and do little to foster Ideal art, which is the link by which all the varied developments of art cohere. They had long ceased to be a living pervading influence when the lamentable state of *Decorative art* was forced upon

the attention of the country by the compelling interest of pecuniary loss, and it was felt that some new vigorous and extensive organization was absolutely necessary to prevent the trades which were in any way connected with art altogether leaving us for our more artistic neighbours. Hence arose the *Schools of Design*, and this very *Museum* in which we now are, and from which, if you are wise, you will not depart empty. If the difficulties of education were enhanced by the constitution of the Academy, the subject becomes still more complicated under the conditions of an organization which professes at once to make art popularly understood, to teach its rudiments to all comers, and to provide a special education for ornamental art of every description.

Here let me pause to say, that when I point out (as I shall do from time to time) what I consider defects in our system, I do so with diffidence. I am quite aware how much earnest and conscientious thought has been devoted by abler men than myself to these subjects. I know how the general direction of thought changes, and though I may differ from men who with great skill and experience have arranged a course of study, and although I can *now* see the ill effects of a particular system, I am fully aware that but for that system we might, perhaps, have taken a turn in the road which might lead still further from the goal we all aim at, and that under similar circumstances, and with similar data, I might myself have come to similar conclusions. When Schools of Design were first established it was the popular notion (a notion I fear by no means extinct) that decorative art was an inferior sort of art, more easily taught and acquired than pictorial art. We have already seen that the practice and teaching of ornamental art entails a far deeper and more intricate knowledge of the whole science of art than any mere imitative picture painting.

I must here pause to meet one obvious objection. You will say, perhaps, "Do you mean to tell me that the men who produced the multitude of objects in the Museum, the goldsmiths, the ironsmiths, the carvers in ivory, the cabinet makers, the ornamental modellers, the glass blowers, and all the host of

sculptors, carvers, tinkers, and glaziers, knew more about art than our Royal Academicians?" I say, most unhesitatingly, that each in his own line undoubtedly did, and what is more, a great many of them had also a far truer conception of art in its highest and most comprehensive sense. Many of these works were no doubt produced by comparatively ignorant men, but then they had all the traditions of the studio, traditions acquired by contact with the artists who designed and directed their work, and a long succession of experience. In those days, the connection of every branch of art was felt and understood, but now all this is lost, and a school of ornamental art can only be effectively established on a system which shall embrace and demonstrate the principles of all its branches, and their intimate connection with one another.

We have already seen that the success of the academic system is marred by the want of definite aim, by professing too much: by embracing the *whole* scale of art, it loses point and power; but reference to our diagram will show that all *decorative* art lies in one direction, viz., towards the ideal pole. Sufficient advantage has not been taken of this fact. The course of instruction pursued in Schools of Design is hardly less imitative than in an Academy for teaching pictorial art, and owing to the admission of idlers, amateurs, and young ladies, and a perhaps laudable wish to make art popular, many of the evils of the modern systems are unfortunately developed, an imitative art, worse than useless in ornament, and the feeblest literal transcripts of nature, supersede, in too many of the schools, the teaching of those great principles on which alone decorative and ideal art can be founded.

Many of the objections against the present system are, however, a little unreasonable. It is said that the schools of design are nothing but miniature academies with all their defects, and with the additional one that they are necessarily conducted by mediocrities; to this it is easy to reply, that if a thing is to be done at all, we must be content with such means as we can get. It would, no doubt, be a very desirable thing to have such men as Watts, Poynter, or Herbert, as masters of our schools, but

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it is just possible that they might not care to take a very laborious and ill-paid office, and there are at present no means of inducing them to do so. If critics would be kind enough fairly to consider the necessary and inherent difficulties of a scheme of national education, and could suggest any practical remedies for evils which every one must equally admit and regret, they would confer a benefit on society. We are too apt to expect too much of new systems, and then to condemn them if they do not attain a perfection we never think of requiring in "old-established concerns." How often do we hear a school of art condemned, because some boy has been there a year without learning to draw. Yet the parallel of this has happened in classical education for thousands of years without provoking even a suspicion of the system.

Again, the country is covered with a network of schools into which every young man who wishes to learn art must inevitably be drawn. That there are no great fish among the multitude enclosed, is certainly a subject of the gravest reflection, but those who complain that a very thin layer of very mediocre art is no compensation (there are some who say it is of itself an unmitigated evil) for the absence of great designers should in common justice remember that when the schools were first established there were not only no great designers but hardly any designers at all; this fact is the reason and justification for their existence; and now that we have an organised system of education, the country would hardly be wise to abandon it for the mere hope that the voluntary system would *now* produce the great men that it failed to produce before; and even if the hope were better founded than I fear it is, would not the admitted difference which it implies between *then* and *now* show that the present system has at least done *some* good,—has prepared the ground for a return to the old system of cultivation, which for so many years had fallen into disuse?

Among the many difficulties of popular art education, none are greater than those which arise from the supposed necessity of stimulating the efforts of the students by *competition*. The evils of the imitative method of drawing which I have already

described are aggravated, and will, I fear, become chronic, under a competitive system, which converts all the schools for the time being into manufactories of those wonderful productions which excite the admiration of the thoughtless, and prove so detrimental to the prospects of those who waste their time over them; but once admit the principle of competition, and this sort of drawing is the inevitable result. Would it not be far better to point out how great the prizes for success already are? Success in art implies a fame wider and more enduring than that of many a victorious general; it implies money and social position;—is it not foolish in such a race as this, to go out of one's way to pick up an apple, even though it were a golden one?

And here I may perhaps be pardoned for pointing out another danger arising from those competitions for *prizes for designs* offered by *tradesmen*, who know nothing of art, and care nothing for it, and who only use the schools to get their designs cheap. They offer a prize, generally some paltry sum, but sufficient to draw from a school a whole batch of designs; the prize being awarded, the unsuccessful candidates are only too ready to dispose of their designs for a merely nominal price, and thus a manufacturer is often set up for half his life; if they are not very good, he has got them cheap, he can advertise them as "prize designs from the Government School of Art," and the public will admire and buy.[1]

Under such a system, *design as a profession* is impossible, or at all events so ill paid, that no man of talent will devote

[1] The good and evil of a government system have as yet never been fairly stated or justly weighed; such a subject is more important than inviting, and few are likely to take the trouble to make themselves acquainted with the facts, or competent to decide upon them; while those who are, have probably taken so decided a side, that their judgment could hardly be considered impartial; a dilemma which, it is true, is not confined to art. The study of theology or jurisprudence is often hampered by the same difficulty; but in those subjects the opposite opinions are stated and met with a logical acumen that is rarely associated with artistic knowledge. How far the evils are necessarily inherent in a government system; whether the actual or probable results of the experiment justify the continuance of the schools; whether progress is to be measured by

himself to it, and so men who might perhaps add a glory to the country, as well as great commercial success to some branch of manufacture, take themselves to the more

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quantity or quality; whether much mediocre art is a good or an evil; whether a given sum expended in museums, or the direct employment, on a large scale, of the best artists, would not more effectually advance the art interests of the country than by spending it in schools; whether direct patronage, if likely to be continuous, would not create a supply of artists, who in their turn would create a more efficient system of private education, are all questions requiring technical and historical knowledge, educational experience, and sound judgment. Compared with any other branch of knowledge, art is a mere chaos of opinions, a state of things not without its advantages to the ignorant; but it is almost hopeless to expect any matter connected with it to be fairly stated, much less intelligently argued. How often, for instance, do we hear Sykes and his pupils quoted as examples of the success of the teaching in Art Schools. Yet the fact is, that they were brought out by the personal influence of Alfred Stevens, who happening at that time to be working in Sheffield, and in no way connected with the schools, imbued the whole town with something of his own genius and style. That the schools afforded a convenient nidus for the embryonic spark of genius, is undoubtedly true; but if the budding forth of art which then took place was owing to the "system," why, it may fairly be asked, does the same system fail to produce the same results anywhere else? and thus, when we examine an example so triumphantly quoted by one side we shall find that in reality it proves everything that could be wished by the other.

I will now give an instance of the extraordinary difficulty of deciding what is best for the country in any particular branch of art. Architects complain that students educated in the schools are of very little use to them; they have been taught to design, but are not sufficiently ready as mechanical draughtsmen. What an architect wants is an intelligent machine without any will of its own, who can work rapidly and well. Now, is the government under any obligation to produce a class of men to suit any particular profession any more than it is to educate men to sew in the lining of hats, or for any other branch of trade? Does not the argument in favour of a government scheme of art, or any other system of education, necessarily rest on its being *general* and not *particular*, and if architecture is to be taught at all, surely the principles of design are the last to be omitted. But, on the other hand, is it wise or even kind to educate persons for a station which it is extremely improbable they will ever reach, while in the meantime they are useless, and perhaps discontented members of society. We complained before that there were no big fish; we complain, now that they have been put into the neceesary condition for growing, that they are apt, at all events, to think themselves *too* big.

lucrative business of subject-picture painting; it is of little use to train artists to a profession by which it is impossible to live, and which they are sure to desert at the first opportunity.

These, then, are some of the evils, dangers, and difficulties of modern art education, and here again we find the same deadening, enervating effect of petty, laborious, mindless imitation, and we may trace the isolation of the various branches of art, the suppression of ornament and its science, alike to the same source, the persistent neglect of ideal art. I am as weary as you must be with finding fault, and I turn with positive pleasure to speak of the many advantages we now enjoy; *advantages* which ought, I hope in your case will, counteract the long catalogue of evils I have just enumerated.

In the first place it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the Museum. We have here a profusion of works in every conceivable material of the highest excellence. Such a collection of splendid and beautiful objects cannot fail to improve the taste of those who, like yourselves, are constantly in the midst of them. We can trace the progress of any art from its earliest stages down to the present time, and the juxtaposition of the art of different periods, the comparison we are able to make between works in one material and those in another, ought to enable us to analyze and detect those important principles which are common to each and all, and thus to lay hold of some filaments at least of the thread of tradition which had so long been lost. We have here under one roof treasures of such surpassing interest, and in such profusion, that nothing comparable could have existed in the Palaces of the Medicis or the Popes. The catalogue seems inexhaustible. Every material the earth produces is here to be seen—carved, turned, bored, twisted, melted, punched, blown, or beaten into every conceivable form of beauty that the taste, skill, or patience of man could invent or execute. What centuries of labour and experience are here stored for our use! Nay, more, they are presented and held out to us. They are exhibited in the manner most convenient to study. You perhaps fancy "they do these things better in France," and that the artists there

have greater opportunities than ourselves; but M. Galland, a decorative artist of great eminence, assures me that for convenience of arrangement, for perfection of lighting and exhibition, for facility of study and reference, the Kensington Museum is superior to anything in his own country; so that you may consider yourselves singularly fortunate: the Department puts you in the fullest possession of all these advantages; it not only gives to each a scholarship, to enable you to prosecute your studies, but at a considerable expense provides a studio and a tutor specially for your instruction, and all it asks in return is, that you should make the fullest use of these great opportunities. Your gratitude as well as your interest should urge you to continued exertion—with exertion it is not possible you can fail.

Reproductions of all sorts, casts, electrotypes, engravings, and, above all, photographs, supply ready and rapid information far greater than could ever have been acquired in former times under the most favourable circumstances during a whole life! we can sit at a table and turn over photographs of the palaces of Italy, can study and measure them with far greater precision and ease than if we were on the spot; indeed, the advantages of photography are so enormous, that it alone ought nearly to outweigh the long list of drawbacks I have enumerated.

Consider, for instance, the magnificent series of the Sistine Chapel. Owing to the height of the ceiling, the intervening light from the windows, the vast scope of the whole scheme of the ceiling, which prevents one concentrating the attention on any particular part, there are few things more fatiguing than looking at these magnificent frescoes, and one generally goes away with the intention of coming again at a more convenient time; but photography presents each group separately, and in the most convenient form, so that it is hardly too much to say that we now see for the first time these stupendous works of the genius of Michael Angelo. The photographs of original drawings, too, are not only admirable studies, but clearly show the method of procedure of the old masters.

When we consider the interest that a great work by Raphael used to excite among his contemporaries, and that artists thought it worth while to take long journeys to see even one of his pictures, we can appreciate the advantage of an art which, at a most moderate outlay, enables us to study at our leisure the drawing and composition of all his masterpieces; while the Library here presents us with folio after folio of prints and photographs of all the galleries of Europe, and every work of importance on architecture, sculpture, and ornamental art, and all the literature of art. Indeed, so great is the profusion, that I hope I shall not be thought captious if I complain of the *embarras de richesses* which is already the result of the continued growth of our library, which seems to require a shorter catalogue of some of the most useful books on each department of art, in order to make its treasures more available to students.

If the gallery of pictures by modern artists is wanting in works of sufficient technical skill to afford examples for our imitation, the frequent loans of collections of pictures by the old masters help to make the educational resources of this great institution perfect.

Then, again, in those sciences which are necessary to art, such as perspective, anatomy, and geometry, the advantages we enjoy are so great compared with those of the middle ages, that when I weigh everything, there really seems no reason why, notwithstanding the many obstructions I have before touched upon, we should not attain to the same heights in art as the great men of old. When we consider that perspective was in its infancy,—that there were then no books of reference on the subject,—that the practice of anatomy was considered infamous, if not criminal—that the artist had to find out all the facts of it for himself,—that geometry was only laboriously acquired,—we ought to think ourselves singularly fortunate in having books on these subjects which give us everything we can possibly want to know, in the clearest and most concise manner.

It may be said, and no doubt it is true, that knowledge

acquired by personal research is sounder and more permanent than that which is got without much intellectual effort; but notwithstanding this objection, such works as those by Albinus, and the modern treatises by Fau, ought to put us on a level, if not with Michael Angelo, at least with most of the old masters as to the facts of anatomy.

We have material enough, if we only knew how to use it aright; but if you once grasp the idea that knowledge is necessary to art, and fully believe that by intellectual effort alone is any permanent progress made, I have little to urge upon you; you will then know and acquire what is necessary without any exhortation from me. You will spend no more time than is necessary in imitative art, but will proceed step by step higher and higher; fully understand and test in yourselves how little you know, and how very imperfect even your best recollections are, and you will feel the necessity of cultivating the faculties of observation and retention with the greatest assiduity; in doing this you will find that you are not only accumulating facts, but the whole scheme of visible nature will expand before you, your imagination will become more definite, and your expression more forcible; but do not let your efforts be confined to trying to recollect this or that appearance, reason upon it till you have as far as possible discovered its cause. Compare what you see with any rendering of it which you may recall in the works of the great men: you will find them true guides to principles which perhaps otherwise would have eluded your grasp. Do not read the book of nature without the commentaries of the Fathers;[1]

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[1] The preaching cobbler very naturally deprecates the study of the Fathers (that is, if he has ever heard of them), and is quite ready to argue any point, however abstruse, with the most learned bishop on the bench. The cobblers just now have it all their own way in art, and learning, it must be admitted, is certainly not necessary, it would, indeed, prove an insurmountable obstacle to the production of most modern art. But this state of things cannot last for ever; the re-action must come, and as a mere matter of prudence, it would be well to know something of the science of art.

good art is never ignorant art, and seldom original. Turner founded his practice on a study of his predecessors, men inferior to himself. I fear the best of us will never be able to plead an excuse of which he was wise enough never to have availed himself.

LECTURE IV.

PRINCIPLES OF ORNAMENTAL ART.

ORNAMENTAL art, pure and simple, is like the measure and rhythm of a verse. A verse may scan, may have a proper accent and cadence—in short, may have all the music of harmonious versification, and yet be made up of words that are mere nonsense; and so in ornament, it is not necessary to its beauty, as ornament, that it should have any meaning: it is quite sufficient that it should be beautiful. Musical notes follow each other in harmonious sequence: it is true you may adapt them to words; but they have of themselves a beauty which is the very essence of music; and I would particularly press on your attention that music is not an imitation of natural sounds, but a science founded on the abstract laws of harmony: its tones and cadences by vague and ineffable suggestions seem in some mysterious manner to recall emotions which lie hidden in our hearts. Compared with music, the definite imitation necessary to art seems to drag us to earth, and I fear that painting must ever rank far below its heavenly sister; but if ever it is exalted, it will be by the study of the abstract laws of harmony and composition, and not by mere imitation.

I admit that there is a good deal open to ridicule in some of Turner's latest works, but I believe he felt some want in art

in the direction of the undefined beauty of music, and some of his pictures may be compared to songs without words.

These considerations and analogies will show you how necessary to ornamental art the laws of harmonious composition must be, and how completely opposed to the true conception of its nature is the modern tendency to despise all science as artificial.

A musician whose only instrument was a cuckoo-call would very naturally deprecate the noisy vulgarity of a more pretentious band. He would be eloquent on "nature" versus "art." So, under pretence that the laws of composition are the *vile corpus* of art, its dregs, and nothing more than academic mannerism, our artists not only avoid a serious study, but are able to persuade the world that their petty transcripts of nature are the highest developments of artistic genius.

In ornamental art our notes are beautiful forms copied or adapted from nature, but we use them simply as notes. They are, for the most part, not intended as anything else. Dismiss at once from your minds all notion that it is necessary or even desirable that ornament should have an illustrative or didactic purpose. To condemn a piece of ornament because it is made up of nondescript dolphins, of labels, and winged griffins, and make jokes about so incongruous an assemblage, shows that the critic has not yet commenced the study of art, and we need not trouble ourselves about him, but at once proceed to learn, if we can, the best way of adding note to note, and how best to make an agreeable composition, and you will find the study of ornamental art in the highest degree useful, even if you are not specially engaged in it; for though all its principles may be deduced from nature, and are found in all good art, they are often in them so subtly concealed, that they would probably have escaped your observation. But in ornamental art, which may be considered as art without subject, the principles of its construction are more easily detected, and when once thoroughly understood, may be traced upwards; for instance, a knowledge of composition of line will enable you to detect its constant presence in the figure, and will be of use not only as a guide in drawing it correctly, but also in com-

posing it gracefully. Yet although I am firmly convinced of the necessity of science, and believe that no real progress will be made in art till we have again caught up the thread of tradition, or invented anew the principles of beauty, I shall proceed at once to apologize for the scanty fare I am able to set before you; the markets for such commodities having long been closed, I have myself to forage for supplies. Accordingly, before I state the few principles on which I hope you may rely for your guidance, I beg you will not accept them for anything more than they are worth, but test them thoroughly by your own research and experience. If you find that they explain the construction of many of the examples in so extensive a collection as the Museum, and can at the same time be traced in pictorial art, and in nature too, and are also in conformity with reason and common sense, you should attach importance to them according to the extent of their application. If a principle seems to pervade *all* ornamental art, it is obviously of more importance than one which can only be traced occasionally. There is nothing new, original, or startling in what I have to say; my teaching is simply a call to the old orthodox paths of art. I will show you the way as far as I can. From that point others abler than myself will no doubt be found to guide you on what I hope will prove a long and successful journey.

I have one caution to give you with regard to principles. They are excellent as guides, but must not be prescribed too rigidly; and reverting to the diagram of the scale of art, of which one pole is ornamental and ideal, while the opposite pole is imitative or descriptive, we shall find that principles which should be rigidly adhered to in the one case, should be gradually relaxed as we tend towards the other.

Principles.

THE law of *even distribution* is at once the most obvious and the most important, and we cannot walk through the Museum without being struck with its universality; it seems to pervade the decorative art of all countries and periods.

Whether we take a Gothic diaper, a majolica plate, the panel of a pilaster, or of a cabinet, or the cabinet itself as a whole, or a building, or a good picture, all is evenly distributed. Do not take a narrow view of this law, or think that it is broken if the thing ornamented ceases to be covered with a minute uniform pattern like the meshes of a net; it would be equally good ornament if every fifth mesh were covered in solid, or if a space of a dozen meshes were treated as a solid at uniform intervals. Too rigid an adherence to this law tends to monotony. Indian ornament is an exquisite, even, minute fretwork, faultless in colour and taste; but, if we go to the Indian Museum, we come out feeling that everything was very beautiful, quite unexceptionable, but a little wearisome: it seems after a time to pall upon us; it ceases to enlist our sympathies, it is a fretwork that might almost have been produced by some insect rather than by man. But how eminently human is Italian ornament! It is evidently the work of the human intellect; it is free from this weary insipidity, not only because it is, as it were, the play of great minds, but because, from a larger comprehension of the law of even distribution, the cinque-cento artists were enabled to incorporate with it *variety*. Take, for instance, the panel of a pilaster: you cannot complain that the ornament is not evenly distributed; but how varied, how playful, how balanced and contrasted it all is. Or take a majolica plate, and examine the arrangement of the ornament; it is evenly distributed, but minute work is balanced and contrasted by larger or more solid masses, and both are evenly distributed; while the space is treated as a whole, and the ornament is specially designed to fill it, whereas the meaner conception of the law of even distribution is content to cover the space with a uniform fretwork which might cover equally well a space of any form or dimensions whatever.

The law of even distribution is not confined to the ornament on small objects, or to ornamental panels in larger, but may be traced in the general arrangement of the parts in the objects themselves, and a general survey of the cabinets in the corridors below will show you that each, regarded as a whole, has the plain and ornamental parts balanced and contrasted,

while these are evenly distributed; and again, in architecture, I need hardly point out how universal this law is. You have only to walk down Pall Mall, or turn over a volume of photographs of continental buildings, to see how evenly distributed are the openings and piers, and the general arrrangement of masses and ornament.

Again, in pictures, evenness of distribution will be found to exist, not only in accordance with the motive of the picture, whether it be ornamental, or descriptive, but according to the feeling and knowledge of ornamental principles in the artist; in mural paintings of an ideal and decorative character, it is an essential, and the easel pictures and designs of the great men, more especially of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian, are also pervaded by a knowledge of the value of this quality. Michael Angelo admitted landscape only in those subjects in which it was necessary to the story, because the details of landscapes harmonize ill with the grand masses of the human figure: it is for this reason that we so often see architecture used as backgrounds; it is not only more orderly, but its masses are simpler, broader, and more of a piece with the human form and its drapery. For the same reason, when landscape is introduced by the great painters, it is not only as ideal and simple as it can be in its outline and masses, but it is put in with power and force that would frighten a modern artist, who regards the background from an imitative, whereas the old master regards it from an ornamental, point of view; and it is from an intuitive perception of the same law, that even the more imitative artists so often paint landscape backgrounds with an evening or twilight effect; it is not only that a more solemn sentiment is thus given to the subject, but the details, which would otherwise be too petty and obtrusive, are swept and rounded into larger and simpler forms. In small plaques of a purely decorative character, the figures should be designed as much as possible to cover the space evenly, in which case it is better to do nothing to the background; indeed, it is under these conditions very difficult to do anything that is so good as leaving it alone, and I should not go far wrong if I laid down a rule that in

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plaques the ground should be plain; anything that you put in it will be little better than distracting rubbish, which lowers at once the ideal and artistic character of the subject.

The treatment of landscape backgrounds by the Japanese is full of valuable suggestions to the artist who is alive to the decorative value of even distribution; but unluckily those who are most indebted to Japanese art, seize upon those exceptional qualities, rare in oriental art, which are exactly opposed to this law, and just now a quaint and surprising irregularity is the rage. It has one advantage, and one only, and that is that it requires *no* intellect to design in this style; to put a big flower or a fish just where they happen to come, and two or three beetles, or crabs, anywhere but in their right place, is not very difficult, and will, I suppose, continue to be done as long as it pays; but directly the public wake again to a sense of the ordered and refined symmetry and balance of Italian art, they will turn with comparative disgust from exaggerated imitations of barbaric quaintness.

While speaking of even distribution, I ought not entirely to pass over the organic rank of the elements of which ornament is composed. It will be found that natural objects have an artistic value and weight according to their organic rank. For instance, the introduction of an amorino, or any human form, at the bottom of a panel of a pilaster, would make it necessary to repeat human or other high organic forms in the upper part as well, otherwise there would be an obvious want of even distribution; but this is a subject which will be treated of at greater length when we speak of the appropriate distribution of different qualities of ornament. Neither would it be right to begin a pilaster of delicate elements drawn out in long and graceful curves, and then change to more ponderous ones whose contours were shorter and more vigorous. The straight lines which so often occur in good ornament, to correct the weakness which would otherwise arise from the too frequent curves, should also be introduced at regular intervals, and so, in the varieties of the curves themselves, an ordered repetition should give harmonious unity to the whole composition. In

short, there should be even distribution of quality as well as of quantity,—in character of line, as well as in mass.

The law of *repetition* is intimately connected with that of even distribution. The more simple the ornament, not only should it be the more evenly distributed, but the more necessary it is that it should be repeated. A simple form which means nothing can be repeated without being tiresome. Representative ornament—such, for instance, as a leaf—is less adapted for repetition than a form which is purely ornamental, and represents nothing whatever; for this reason I have always admired the Doric and Ionic in preference to the Corinthian order of architecture; for orders imply repetition. The more nearly the elements of ornament approach the imitation of nature, the less they are adapted for repetition. The higher their organic rank, the less ought they to be repeated. A panel made up of curves and strapwork, however complex its construction, may be repeated over and over again without weariness, but if we introduced the human figure into the composition, it would, strictly speaking, be necessary to make a fresh design, at least so far as the figures were concerned, for each panel.

In the same way, the more severe the style of a building, the more nearly it approaches the right pole of our scale, the more necessary is the repetition of all its parts; and consequently the elements of which the ornament is composed must not be imitated from nature, but must be simple and conventional.

Variety is the opposite of repetition, and should always be subordinated to symmetry and order, and should only be used in the least essential parts of an architectural or ornamental composition; but of this more hereafter. We will proceed to notice the principle of *symmetry*, which, although not more universal in its application, is a law of a higher order than *even distribution;* it is a form of *repetition*, the result of doubling, or repeating twice. *Symmetry* is the symbol of unity and order: it is stately, simple and dignified. *Variety* is the symbol of accident, irregularity, and decay. It is picturesque, but petty, and of a lower ornamental rank.

The one belongs to the ideal, the other to the opposite pole of art. The common experiment of writing a name in ink, and creasing the paper while it is wet, so that it prints a repetition on the opposite side, affords a capital illustration of the ornamental value of doubling. Any form, even the ugliest, when balanced by its double, will become ornament; and this symmetrical doubling is one of the causes, and certainly not the least, of the beauty of two-thirds of the examples we have in the Museum. Panels are almost invariably so treated, and this treament, simple as it is, is so good that it is almost a necessity to use it, because an inferior design, or even no design at all, will, by the help of this alone, be far better than a design of much greater artistic capacity without it.

You have only to walk through the Museum to see how universal this law of symmetry is, and I might fill a folio with examples. It is equally obvious in classical and even in Gothic architecture, though latterly (as might easily be inferred from the general tendency of modern art) an attempt has been made to substitute the opposite principle of picturesque irregularity. I am quite willing to admit that irregularity, or the absence of symmetry, is less objectionable in Gothic than in other styles, which are more orderly, and based on higher conceptions of art; but the old Gothic architects are, I am convinced, libelled by their friends on this point. I doubt if any architect worthy of the name ever neglected symmetry, unless from necessity. That Gothic architecture was irregular, arose from an extraordinary intellectual lapsus in the architects, who failed to perceive that their art as much applied to the first conception of a building as a whole, as it did to its component parts and details; they accepted the necessities, or what appeared so to them, of construction, almost as if these were beyond their control, and then taking the separate parts one by one, they ornamented them as best they might. A house was made up of a chapel, a dining hall, a ladies' room, a kitchen, a closet. It never occurred to them to treat all these things in one comprehensive and symmetrical scheme. If a Gothic architect had had the building of man, we should have had our liver and

intestines all plainly visible This is the defect of the style, but the want of symmetry arose from the blind acceptance of this narrow view of architecture, rather than from any want of feeling for its value, and, with this great exception, the Gothic architects were as symmetrical as they could be. The church, the chapel, the dining-hall, were all symmetrical, and the picturesque irregularity so much admired was generally due to accident or want of funds, rather than to design. The towers at the west end of a cathedral were planned symmetrically; all the parts of a church were balanced one against another;—but I will not digress into a disquisition on Gothic architecture. I mentioned it because modern critics would probably quote it as at variance with the law of symmetry.

I need hardly repeat what I have already said in speaking of even distribution, that the law of symmetry has weight according to what we may call the ornamental rank of any picture or decoration. The symmetry, which is a necessity in a pilaster, would not be required in a painted spandril, particularly if the motive of it were to tell some story. As subject predominates, so does this principle wane; but if figures were used in the same place with a purely decorative object, then the law would again come into force. A man with a knowledge and love of ornamental art will always tell his story as symmetrically as he can; and even in easel pictures, in which symmetry ceases to be necessary, it often maintains its influence.

To trace this law through pictures and bas-reliefs would be a most interesting and instructive study, but I cannot do more here than mention a few of the most conspicuous examples:—The Dispute of the Sacrament, the School of Athens, the Marriage of the Virgin, the St. Cecilia, by Raphael; the Temptation and Dead Christ, in the National Gallery, by Michael Angelo; the Assumption by Titian, and numerous Holy Families and other compositions by Perugino. All these will afford to the student obvious instances of this law.

There is one modification of the law of symmetry both in nature and art which I cannot pass unnoticed. The central part of a compound leaf is more symmetrical than those parts

which are repeated on each side. The fact that the parts, though in themselves irregular, are balanced by similar parts on the opposite side, seems to excuse the local want of symmetry; and so leaves, regarded by themselves, may be individually wanting in that symmetry, which is restored by their growing in pairs. In like manner the west end of a cathedral, being one and central, should be symmetrical, but it is not equally necessary that the ends of the transept should be so, and accordingly these may have a turret at one angle only; and yet, as each transept is repeated on the opposite side, the building, as a whole, may remain symmetrical.

I cannot omit to notice the symmetry of the human figure. All facts of nature conform to utilitarian as well as to æsthetic principles, and symmetry is no doubt necessary to the mechanical balance of the body, and the whole trunk, though it contains organs of every sort and size, is symmetrical not only (as is obvious) in the back and front views, but in some measure in the side view as well. The masses of the pectoral are balanced by those of the blade-bone, while the spine of the blade-bone corresponds to the clavicle. The mass covered externally by the *latissimus dorsi*, corresponds to that which encloses the ribs below the pectoral, while at the base of each may be traced the same depression. The comparative want of symmetry in the limbs is excused, as it were, and restored by their repetition. The muscles, too, of the limbs are symmetrical, according to their central position. The biceps in front, the triceps behind, the rectus of the thigh, the calf, and *tendo achillis* are all symmetrical; and so in the head and face, the top of the head, the frontal bone, the nose, the mouth, and chin are symmetrical, being single and on the central line; but the eye, the ear, and the cheek are not of themselves symmetrical, being repeated. In short, the human figure, and, indeed, everything in nature, may be safely asserted to be as symmetrical as its uses will permit; but in ornament, which is not hampered with any condition of use, there is no excuse for the want of symmetry.

LECTURE V.

PRINCIPLES OF ORNAMENT.

CONTRAST may be called variety intensified; it enhances by bringing into juxtaposition two opposite qualities: it is the source of vivacity, brilliance and force. If a composition appears dead or monotonous, you will know that it is wanting in contrast; if your flesh-painting looks sleepy or mealy, you will know that the shadows are not brought with sufficient contrast up to the lights, or that the colours are so much mixed together, that each is deprived of its contrasting power.

The ornamental leaf so common in panels of pilasters, affords a capital example of contrast. The simple contour, the rounded form, the broad but graduated light of the upper surface, are contrasted and enhanced by the varied and deep serrations of the lower edge, by which irregular and dark shadows are brought with sparkling effect right into the mass of rounded light, and when the leaves are repeated, as is usually the case, the rounded light of the next leaf emerges with beautiful effect from the general shadow of the one above. The elegant radiating forms of these leaves are contrasted with the more solid masses of vases. The straight line which invariably marks their upper edge, contrasts with and strengthens the varied curves of the rest of the composition, which without them would be too pliable and weak,

while the whole ornamental space of the panel is contrasted with the plain severity of the enclosing mouldings and styles. (Plate 21.) Thus we see how important a part *contrast* plays in good ornament. In majolica plates we trace its effective use. The graceful, but balanced, sprigs of leaves are contrasted with panelled spaces filled with more simple ornament, while the freer play of line in the centre is contained and contrasted by the symmetrical severity of the border.

In architecture, the moulded and ornamental doors and windows are contrasted with the plain wall,[1] the rich capital by the plain shaft, the dark and frowning cornice by the lighter wall below.

I need hardly say that contrast is invariably used to give value to flesh, both in sculpture and painting. If you observe the draperies on any antique, you will see how incisive they are. The treatment of the hair, too, is a composition of many vigorous incisive lines; what is the artistic meaning of this? it is simply to give value to the flesh, the contours of which are large, flowing and simple, the masses full and beautifully rounded into shade, while the outlines of the draperies or the hair are more angular and jagged, the masses cut up in sudden lights and deep cutting shadows.

The statue of a recumbent nymph, by Baily, which was for some time exhibited in the Museum, affords an example of the narrow conception of modern imitative art. Very likely the luxuriant and smooth hair of a woman would, if cast, present a surface not unlike the hair of Baily's statue; but hair of that sort would be black, or of some decided colour, affording the strongest contrast to the flesh. In mere imitation of detail, Baily was right; but he failed in that large conception of the whole which is the characteristic of the antique and of all good art.

In colour, and in light and shade, the use of contrast is more obvious than in form, but these subjects are too large for consideration here. While nature presents an endless succes-

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[1] The value of plain spaces is not sufficiently appreciated by ornamentists; they cannot, I suppose, keep their fingers off them.

sion of contrasts,—night and day, land and sea, the smooth field and the dark irregular woods, the square and angular forms of rocks and the feathery foliage of trees, the dark and serrated edge of a mountain and the soft and fleecy mist; the massive storm clouds, and the streaky cirrhus are contrasted on precisely the same principle as that adopted by Sir Christopher Wren, when he surrounded the dome of St. Paul's with the almost needle-like spires of the parish churches.

We now come to the *composition of line*, a quality which pervades all nature, which constitutes the very soul of ornament, and which may be traced in the pictorial art of all great men; and here let me pause to caution you against considering these principles of ornament as nothing more than receipts culled from the practice of the old masters; though, if they were no more than this, they would be entitled to respect; they are for the most part formulas, founded on some simple fact or principle of nature, or on an intuitive perception of the reasons of its beauty. The principle of *radiation* of line, is the statement of a simple fact, the springing from a common centre; anything flexible suspended from two points gives the *festoon*, while a continuous curve leads naturally to the *volute*. (Plate I.)

That each curve should have a path of its own, not to be interrupted or cut, while curves in the opposite direction should touch and pass on their own course, or meet and melt into it, are principles obviously in harmony with the nature of curves, whether regarded simply as lines, or as outlines of contained forms; this naturally explains the important law of tangential composition, a law which equally applies to curves which are back to back, and to those which bend in the same direction, as, for example, in radiating curves. This law is so universal, that it will be unnecessary to give more than one or two instances to explain its application, which your own researches will confirm by a multitude of examples.

The anthemium, the scroll, and the volute, are the simplest expressions of this law, and there is an obvious relationship between them. If we analyze the causes of the beauty of the anthemium, we shall find them in variety subordinated to

symmetry. The lines have a proportionate relationship to one another, while the pervading law of radiation gives an unity to the whole. It is not necessary that radiating curves should actually start from a given point, or even touch a central line. When they do so, they often appear cramped, and we accordingly find in the majority of examples, in nature as well as in art, that they tend to meet rather than actually do so; indeed, if we consider the lines as bounding a substance, it is impossible that they should meet. In the acanthus, for instance, if the lines actually met, there would be a want of substance in the most important part.

Composition of line is most obvious in purely conventional ornament, but it may be clearly traced in all natural forms, particularly in the human figure, in its markings, in the contour of the limbs, and in its relation to other figures forming a group, as will be shown at large in my "Lessons on the Human Figure." But I may here briefly notice some of the most obvious instances. The curved outline of one side of the body, or of a limb, is very frequently continued on the opposite side, its path being sometimes traced by a continuous marking, or indicated by markings less defined, but very generally lying in the direction of the line.

The line of the shoulder is continued by that of the jaw, round the top of the head, returning by the line of the other jaw to the opposite shoulder, or in a side view to the pit of the neck. (Plate 2.) The higher and squarer shoulders of a man in this way harmonize with the square jaw and comparatively short neck; while in woman the falling shoulders necessitate a longer neck and a more oval and tapering form of face. This composition of line is very frequent in the works of Raphael; indeed, his knowledge of the composition of flowing curves is the source of his pre-eminence for grace. In the side view of the figure the contour of the back, continued by the ridge of the pelvis, flows into the curve which bounds the front of the thigh. The contour of the *latissimus dorsi* may be traced by a series of well-defined markings to join and flow into the outlines of the buttock. The flattened curve of the outside of the thigh goes suddenly in above the knee, and crops out again to form the

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outline of the calf on the opposite side, while the outline of the adductor muscles on the inside is continued to form the outline of the outside of the leg below. (Plates 3 and 4.) In the arm, the marking of the muscular part of the triceps almost always composes with the outline of the supinator muscles; while an examination of the form of the external condyle will show how admirably it is contrived to flow into the line of the radius. The leading lines of the face give in a remarkable way the arrangement of lines most commonly to be found in ornament. The composition of the lines of the features, more especially the mouth, is marvellous, and worthy of the closest study. (Plate 5.)

These examples from the human figure are sufficient for our purpose here; but I need hardly say that it is entirely made up of forms which combine and compose with each other in the most subtle and beautiful manner. It was a complete perception of this that gave Michael Angelo a power greater even than that of Phidias. His perception of the composition of the line of the leg with the ground enabled him to give a firmness and grasp to his feet, hitherto unknown, and this leads me to the consideration of similar lines in quadrupeds, lines wonderfully expressive of the action. (Plate 6.)

The general composition of lines in quadrupeds is most interesting, and would make a study of itself. I can only briefly allude to it here, and I will just notice the composition of wings with the body and foreleg in the griffins and other imaginary animals, which so frequently occur in ornamental art. (Plates 6 and 7.)

The human figure is not wanting in instances of radiation of lines. The radiation of the fingers is one source of the grace and beauty of the hand.[1] (Plates 2, 4, and 6.) A perception of this is of the greatest use in drawing, and will enable you without difficulty to give that natural ease which is essential in

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[1] A treatise might be written on the composition of the hand. I hope to see the day when we shall have a treatise on the æsthetic principles of the human figure, similar to the "Bridgwater Treatise" on its mechanical structure.

art. The toes also exhibit this quality; indeed radiation may be traced wherever there is a tendency to a common centre; for instance, in the muscles, which have their insertion in the head and upper part of the humerus; and I cannot conclude the instances of this arrangement of line without noticing its almost invariable use in the composition of the lines and masses of the hair, which, starting from a centre on the poll of the head, were often drawn with a mechanical precision, almost like engine-turning, so as to form a sort of radiated rosette (Plate 7); while in others the principle, though more subtly concealed, may easily be traced as the basis of the composition.

Composition of line in the varied action of the limbs may constantly be traced in every well-posed figure (Plate 8); while in a group the composition is simply extended and more complicated; but as *drapery* forms one of the elements in so many of the compositions which I shall refer to, I will briefly note some of its leading characteristics. As drapery almost invariably depends from one or two points of support, I need not tell you that radiation of line is its prevailing principle; indeed, so universal is its use that when once pointed out it becomes almost tiresome.

The simplest form of drapery, hanging from two points, will give a series of festoons; but more often a succession of folds alternately preponderating on one side or the other. (Plate 9.)

As a general rule one point of support is secondary to the other, and the primary point would naturally be on, or in the direction of, the hip on which the figure rested. This arrangement became conventional, and was reduced to a system by Perugino, and adopted in almost all the early works of Raphael. (Plate 10.) The figure was almost invariably posed on one leg, the other being bent. In short, the action, though graceful, was often affectedly exaggerated, while a group of figures, all in one position, became almost ridiculous. The thigh of the bent leg was as broad and simple as possible, and without folds, or with only a few, which did not cut up the mass. Across the leg below passed the festoons of drapery, which, hanging from the supporting hip on one side, were con-

tinued to the back of the opposite shoulder, or formed a mass of radiating folds round the waist.

The Ghiberti gates furnish us with an almost endless series of examples of drapery, composed on the simple principle of radiation (Plate 11), and we must here notice a variety which is caused by the folds overlapping each other, in a manner which is very common in drapery, and forms a great source of beauty. You all know how beautiful is the somewhat complicated radiation of lines near the pivot of a fan. This arrangement was much used by Ghiberti. It gives complexity and variety, without destroying the unity which results from the lines of the drapery being subjected to the ruling law of radiation.

The radiation of the folds of the sleeve caused by the bending of the arm is not more constant in art than in nature, although Perugino repeated the same lines over and over again, without taking the trouble to vary them, as he might have done with the greatest ease. (Plate 12.) His persistent mannerism had no doubt a good as well as an evil influence on Raphael, and the invariable excellence of his draperies, and the exquisite grace which comes from his profound feeling for and knowledge of the composition of lines (Plate 13), must in some measure be attributed to the thorough schooling he received in these oft-repeated principles.

In the antique, the folds of the draperies afford many examples of composition, more especially of radiation, sometimes executed with a precision almost too exact for art. (Plate 15.)

The line of beauty, which is so often indicated by the folds of drapery round a limb, is so frequently used in ornamental figures, that I cannot pass over it. (Plate 12.) Almost all conventional representations of the drapery of the arm on the majolica plates are made up of a series of these curves. It is also much used when the figure is drawn nude, and close fitting drapery is suggested by a few lines, principally at the joints.

I must also mention here what I have before stated with regard to purer ornament, that it is necessary to avoid the introduction of too many curves by the occasional use of straight

lines, which give firmness and repose to a figure. The straight lines, which fall direct from the point of support, or which, slightly radiating, terminate in cascades, the edges of which are almost straight, form a pleasing contrast to the repeated curves in the other parts; and the straight lines of the under garment, which is generally seen below the more voluminous folds of the cloak or toga (Plate 10), serve the same end. But it is not only in drapery that we must seek for the straight line. In the human figure the tendons contrast with the swell of the muscles, and in the horse the straight lines of the head and the legs counteract the otherwise too florid use of curves. (Plate 6.)

Michael Angelo well knew the value of the straight line, as we may see by its frequent occurrence in the most skilful of his compositions, and I may here state that in spandrils, or spaces bounded by curved lines, it is more grateful than in square panels, the sides of which already afford an agreeable contrast to curvilinear ornament in the centre. (Plate 14.)

Festoons are also eminently useful to counteract less ordered curves, and to bind together the two sides of a composition, as well as to give balance and firmness to the whole.

With these preliminary remarks we may now proceed to the consideration of those compositions which afford examples of the foregoing principles.[1] Beginning first with conventional ornament, in which the leading lines are nothing more than the simplest expression of the simplest laws, passing on to ornament made up of organic forms, which are easily adapted to the necessary curves, and then to that in which the human figure is used ornamentally; and finally tracing the same laws through all good pictorial art until we come to see them as surely, though more subtly, marked in Nature herself, we shall find a knowledge of these laws of the greatest use. It is not only the key to a proper understanding of the compositions of the old masters, and the source of grace, but it is invaluable as a guide to correct drawing even of the most imitative kind, for

[1] The lecture was concluded with reference to examples in the Museum and Library.

it enables you to see and to draw the outline of the higher organic forms with a precision and force that it would be almost impossible to attain without it. These principles will in time so pervade your sense of form, that you will draw and use your brush under their influence, sweeping each contour into harmony with others; and I hope that in time you may come in some measure to realize the truth, unity, and grace of Nature herself.

LECTURE VI.

THE ELEMENTS OF ORNAMENT.

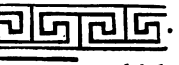
HAVING in the previous lectures examined the principles of ornament, we will now proceed to consider and classify the elements of which it is composed, and we will first notice the simplest use of straight lines, not only where they are more obviously used as ornament, as in the reeds and flutes of a column, but as the borders of panels, represented either by lines of black or colour, or by the varied shadows of mouldings, in the perpendicular lines of architecture, as well as in the prevailing horizontal lines or cornices, all of which are quite as important æsthetically as they are practically, giving firmness, solidity, and simplicity to the composition.

Straight lines at right angles to each other give these qualities in a still greater degree. So severe, compact, and entirely satisfactory are rectangles ornamentally that we seem to want nothing more in a building so constructed, except to emphasize the lines by mouldings, and it is exceedingly difficult to introduce looser or more florid ornament without doing more harm than good.

And so in a composition of ornament, panelling can hardly be overdone: it is more satisfactory than anything else, and you will often find that when you have composed an ornament

for a rectangular space, which may seem a little loose or untidy, if you simplify, reduce its size, and enclose it with a border, it will pass muster very well; and I may here say that it is always well to enclose ornament with a line of the same colour or material as the ornament itself: a modelled panel should have a projecting fillet, in the same way that a relief carved on a stone or marble slab would naturally have.

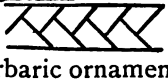
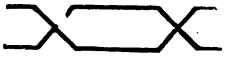
Frets are the most obvious examples of the ornamental use of lines at right angles to each other. Beginning with , by adding a joint, we have , which becomes ; then with another joint we get , and so on till we come to those very complicated frets which exasperate rather than please by their complexity.

The next variety is obtained by using as the element, and we get , and this can be extended and made more complex in the same manner as before,  . Another element of fret-like ornament is , which leads to many patterns.

Frets are generally set out so that the light and dark spaces shall be equal, and the perpendicular and horizontal lines shall also be nearly equal. But my own predilections are rather in favour of either the light or dark predominating,—I think the pattern is thereby less confusing, and I also think that frets are prettier if they are slightly elongated rather than square. Running frets should, I think, be preferred in long corridors, and in continuous lines; in a square room, a fret which did not run, and was itself square in character, would perhaps be more appropriate. I believe a good deal of time and thought is wasted by puzzling oneself as to which way patterns should run. It is a matter of no importance, and if you cannot decide it by reasoning, settle it by tossing up.

Frets are particularly suitable for flat surfaces; indeed, a fret on a curved surface would be altogether out of place; and I may here note that a consideration of the ornaments com-

monly used on architectural mouldings will show that the profile of the moulding is repeated by the leading lines of the ornament upon it. Thus on the flat we get , flutes, or dentils, ; on the cyma recta, ; on the ovolo, the egg, ; on the torus, , or scales crossing each other, ; while the ornament on an ogee is almost universally made up of lines of cyma reversa, . Note also how few architectural patterns run. Patterns round arches, or enclosing circles, should not run in one direction; they tend to destroy the unity of the composition. I do not of course mean to say that they are never to be used, but they should not predominate. The ornament on the external band of a shield, for instance, should radiate; and so, if there is only one pattern on an arch, it is better that it should radiate than run: but let us return to our frets.

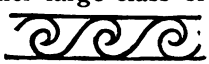
The next great variety is that which is made up of diagonal straight lines, thus, . This repeated becomes , which is the same as the fret with the angle altered, and almost all the frets can be pleasingly varied in this way. Then we have , which repeated below becomes a very beautiful ornament. Then come the plait  , and zigzag , so common in all barbaric ornament. Diagonal lines which cross each other  lead to a whole class of ornament.

When you come to triangles, if you will only look at the multiplicity of patterns of inlay work, or even the tile flooring of the Museum, you will see that the subject is too large for consideration here. I have only to say that most of these patterns can be resolved into the triangle and hexagon, or

square and octagon. Interlaced work and strap work are not sufficiently studied and used in architectural ornament, for which their severe, conventional, and non-imitative character eminently adapts them.

The circle is the element of much good ornament. First, circles that touch one another, , then those that cut and appear like a series of connected rings, , then overlapping series of circles which touch one another. . The well-known money moulding is composed of a series of circles or discs strung together, , and last and most important of all is the guilloche, so useful in architecture, . It is an easy step from the guilloche to the repetition of curves or lines of beauty, , whence springs a large and almost inexhaustible series of ornament, for examples of which I must refer you to Owen Jones' admirable "Grammar of Ornament." I will, however, just note its simplest developments.

Varieties of the spiral, , the continuous flowing line which forms the stalk of so many ornaments; then ; the same curves reversed, and lastly arranged perpendicularly, . These repeated below form the basis of many mural and textile patterns.

Volutes combined with curves form another large class of ornament. The well-known Greek wave  ornament; curves which turn outwards, , or that turn inwards, , and again curves which are repeated back to back, , give the leading principle of the ornament of

many panels and pilasters. forms another variety of the same element. Anthemiums, and all the various expressions of the law of radiation are too well known to need any description; and when we have mentioned beads, egg and tongue, flutes, quadroons, and scale work, we shall have enumerated the principal varieties of simple conventional ornament, which is in no sense an imitation of natural objects. (Plate 16.)[1]

The next great division of elements consists of vegetable forms, resembling nature, but, like all good ornament, simplified and artistically constructed; first, *stalks* straight or curved, ribbed, fluted, reeded, twisted, and spiral; then joints leading to *sheaths* from which the stalks ramify or throw out leaves, and these becoming more complicated assume the cup-like form of what are technically called *nests*, composed of many leaves, from which shoot up the stalks and spirals, which compose such a scroll as that of the Medicis pilaster.

Although my object here is simply to make a classified list of elements which will be dealt with separately in future lectures, *Foliage* is a subject of such importance to the student, that it will perhaps be considered not out of place if I say a few words on some of its leading principles at once; and first of the Acanthus. You need not trouble yourselves to find out the exact plant from which it is taken, or waste any time in speculations as to the origin of its architectural use; for it is not so much an imitation of nature, as an artistically constructed ornament. We may trace a gradation in its style from the severe rigid symmetry proper for the capital of a noble order, down to the varied and delicate beauty of the more naturalistic foliage of a panel; the essential characteristic

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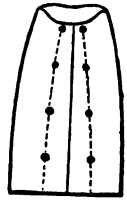
[1] This sort of analysis can be carried somewhat farther by the student; what I have done is probably sufficient to enable me to explain in a future lecture the proper order and distribution of ornament, and also to enable the student to arrange his sketch-book for collection and reference, a very important aid to success. When ornament is complicated, it is generally sufficient to trace its leading lines. Its analysis is often more ingenious than instructive.

of all good ornamental foliage is stiffness. Limpness or flaccidity is the worst fault it can have, and in drawing the principal curves you should take care that they start strong and straight, and then turn firmly and gracefully over; and in setting out the radiating lines of the pipes and ribs, be careful not to make them so monotonously graceful as to impair the stern dignity which is essential in the highest style of foliage; you must also be very sparing of variety. Before describing the leading types of leaves, I will give a few directions which are generally applicable to their construction. The central stalk when seen in front, is of course straight, the pipes and ribs are ranged on each side like the lobes of an anthemium, and the greatest care should be taken in setting out these leading lines. The first thing to be determined is the general form or outline within which the leaf is to be contained. This varies considerably, the sides of some being nearly perpendicular and parallel, while others spread out at the base. Having settled the leading outline, we have next to set out the position of the eyes, and these will lie in a line nearly parallel to the sides. In the short leaves of a capital, the upright spaces between the eyes, though very slightly diminishing toward the top, may be said to be equal; but the space between the lowest eyes and the base of the capital is considerably less, because the leaf is cut off at its thickest part, so that it shall sit firmly on the astragal of the shaft; for these reasons the lower leaflet must be considered abnormal; but in the longer leaves, the diminution in the distances between the eyes, as they approach the top, is more obvious. Having set out the eyes, we now have to draw the pipes which descend from them. These pipes, though perhaps suggested by natural leaves, may almost be said to be a creation of art: they owe their preponderance over the ribs to their tapering downwards instead of upwards, as the ribs of the leaves must necessarily have done, and thus too much crowding is avoided at the base of the leaf. Try to emphasize the ribs instead of the pipes, and you will at once understand the motives and necessities of the old artists. (Plate 17.)



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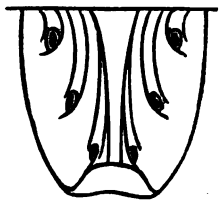
A comparison of the finest examples with those of a feebler style will show that they owe their dignity to the massive rigidity of their stalks and pipes. Now, the character of these pipes depend in a great measure on the general outline of the leaf and *vice versâ;* if the leaf splays out at the base, there is plenty of room for each pipe to take a vigorous and independent course of its own, and leave space for each leaflet to spring from the base. (No. 1.) But if the sides of



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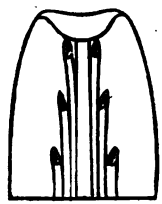

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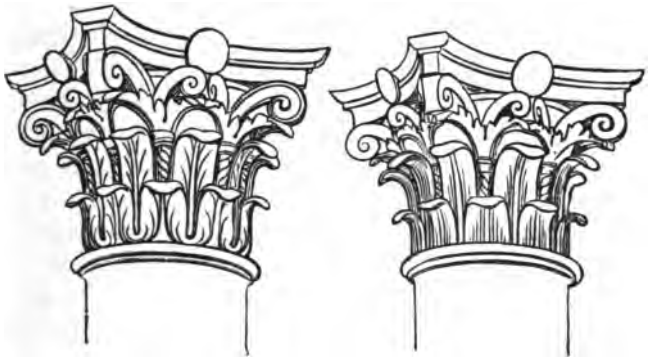
the leaf are more parallel, the space occupied by the pipes will be much curtailed, and they must either taper and converge more suddenly into the central stalk (No. 2), or run directly down in perpendicular lines. (No. 3.) The only objection to the last treatment, which is that commonly adopted, is that it allows no space for the lower parts of the leaflets; they have to disappear, as it were, behind the central mass on which the stalks and pipes are drawn in vigorous incisive grooves, but in the expression of rigidity and firmness, this treatment is better than No. 2, for in that the pipes taper to weakness, and the leaf has a solitary backbone, whereas No. 3 is all backbone, and this weakness is made still more obvious by the monotonous grace of the radiating lines of the leaflets and pipes which run too much in one direction. The care with which this fault is generally avoided, shows the profound knowledge of the old artists; and you will seldom find system No. 2 adopted in leaves for capitals, though in those for ornamental panels a tendency to a more feminine grace may be permitted; but even in these we may trace what, to a superficial observer, might appear a discord, while in reality it is a chord of a nobler harmony. In the example from the temple of Jupiter Olympius at Athens, there is the nearest

approach I have yet noticed to a uniform system of radiation of the lines of both pipes and leaflets; but in this case the whole character of every part of the leaf is so strong and stony, that it can well afford to bear these graces without much loss of its stern dignity.

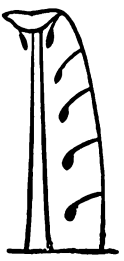
In many examples of the Corinthian and Composite orders the leaves of the capital have a slight tendency to appear as if they sprang between the capital and the shaft, and formed a nest to enclose the bell. In this case, the pipes of the leaves should splay out at their base, as in No. 1, but this splaying out, more especially of the bell, should be used with the



1. 2.

utmost moderation. Where the outline of the bell continues the perpendicular line of the shaft (No. 2), the stalks and pipes of the leaves should go straight down on the top of the astragal.

When we have determined the position of the eyes and the character of the pipes that descend from them, our next task will be to draw the general outline of the leaflets between each eye, and more especially the line of their lower border, for on that principally depends, not only the form of the leaflet itself, but of each eye as well. Diagram 3 will best explain the variation of angle as we approach the top of the leaf, and also show the variation in the form of the eyes. We have next to draw the upper part of the leaflet,



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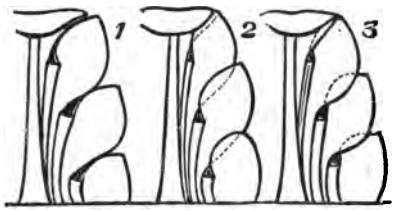
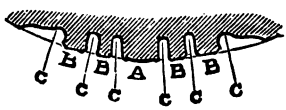
and on this depend the three leading types of the acanthus. First, those whose leaflets do not extend beyond the lower edge of the leaflet above. Secondly, those which, exceeding it, lap over. Thirdly, those that lie under the leaf above.



Now, before we can quite understand the respective merits of these treatments, it will be necessary to consider the light and shade of each, for it is, after all, as a composition of light and shade that we must consider this subject. Let us revert to what I said as to the necessity of emphasizing the stalks and pipes, if we would give a stern and rigid character to the leaves; and this sort of sternness, we must remember, is more necessary out of doors than in. Now, as the light out of doors comes from above, there is no difficulty in getting effect by *horizontal* projections or hollows; but to get any effect in *perpendicular* lines, it is necessary not only to plough them in very deeply, but to undercut them as well.[1] The following section will best explain the depth and extent of the undercutting:—A is the projecting central stalk; B B the pipes; C C C is the hollow of the surface of the leaflets. Now, if the general surface of the leaf were a plane level throughout, with the points, C C C C, it is obvious that the stalk and pipes would be disagreeably prominent and isolated, and accordingly we find that each leaflet, as it merges between the pipes, assumes the form of a cockle-shell, the points of the foliage standing forward till they are level with the face of the pipes, and thus each leaflet holds, as it were, in its palm a piece of precious graduated shadow, contrasted on the one hand by the deep, black cutting shadow of the pipes, and on the other by the



[1] When we come to consider the Gothic style we shall find that the same principle holds good; and the more acute the arch the more deep and reed-like are its mouldings.

sparkling edge of the upper points of the leaf, which is still further emphasized by its coming against the shadow thrown by the leaflet above. In this style the leaflets are much undercut, and this leads me to a very important point—the degree of thickness which is necessary in a stone leaf and the quality of its edge. Now, I think every leaf ought to be massive, and obviously stone; no attempt should be made to imitate the thinness of natural leaves, and the edge ought not to be too smooth and uniform, and seldom cutting. Any attempt at neat precision would be fatal to the dignity of a great leaf; and now we see why this style of leaf is proper for columns of vast proportions, and we may almost say proper only for them, for if they were much diminished, they would be too thin for stone. I hope you begin to appreciate the skill with which all the necessary qualities are produced; the rigid stalks and pipes drawn with bold black lines; the shadow which exhibits the shell-like form of the leaflet, the light edge which everywhere clearly defines it, while the unity of the whole leaf is expressed by the harmonious radiation of its principal lines, and the one great shadow from its overhanging apex. Truly the men who conceived and executed all this were consummate artists.

Those who know anything of the prevailing tendencies in our schools will not be surprised to hear that the study of the works of these great masters of ornamental art has been entirely superseded by flat and flimsy naturalistic rubbish; a few outlines from Albertolli, and the everlasting Madeleine scroll, being alone retained to represent, I suppose, classical art. The Madeleine scroll is nothing more than the Medici scroll put into the modern mill, and turned out spick-and-span new, with every one of its beauties stamped into metallic mechanical ugliness; and, though magnificent examples of antique, as well as of cinquecento foliage, are easily to be obtained, this piece of neat vulgarity is still the stock in trade of our schools, and hundreds of copies are made of it every year.

For drawing, the student is furnished with emasculated copies of Albertolli's foliage. Albertolli has the style of a

writing master, and astonishes us by his flourishes and the graceful sweep of the lines of his engraving; but his drawings give no idea of the originals. If you look through Albertolli, you will see the same leaf repeated for ever. I do not assert that there is no *authority* to be found for a leaf somewhat similar, but if you will only examine the examples of foliage we have in the Museum, you will see that he has chosen a very bad style, and has altogether omitted any hint of the existence of any other. How bad Albertolli is, you will learn to know; but, even if he had not entirely failed to convey any notion of the beauty of the antique, I should object altogether to his use of a thin, wiry outline, because it is impossible to represent the form of foliage by it: it represents, and can represent, nothing but that abomination in art, a tin edge. To compel students to leave out the beauty of the things they copy is a fatal mistake; if their interest in ornament is not effectually extinguished by the process, this system of study will inevitably develope in their future work the same defects as I have just noticed in the Madeleine scroll.

But to return to our shadow. There is no difficulty in getting shadow beneath the lower edge of a leaflet, and the more horizontal is its direction the deeper will be its shadow, and the light edge of the upper part of the leaflet below will be most effectively relieved by coming against this shadow. This simple arrangement is so completely effective that you will find it adopted in the majority of cinquecento capitals; and an examination of the following example will, I think, convince you that the Italians were hardly less skilful than their ancestors. In the Roman capital the vigorous incisive lines produced an effective contrast with the plain and perhaps polished shaft. In this an exactly opposite principle is adopted; the whole face of the leaf is kept as broad as possible; the surface is subtly but vigorously modelled; as the leaflets bend firmly forward, they cast a graduated shadow, while their serrated

outline sparkles against the shadow of the leaflet above. Their edge is massive, and in every respect the leaf looks strong. But when we come to the second variety, in which the top of each leaflet laps over the bottom of the one above, there is almost necessarily a diminution of their apparent thickness, an effect which, it is true, is to some extent avoided by the top of each leaflet bending forward. And this bending forward is necessary on other grounds, for it gives a shadow to supply the place of that which is lost by the hollow between the leaves being filled up. When you take all these circumstances into consideration, you will easily understand the rationale of the overlapping leaflets; but nothing is so calculated to impress this on your memory as modelling, or better still, carving a leaf. You will see how natural it is to cut away the leaf above in order to give relief to the top of the one below. You will understand why the overlapping leaves are more flat, and have less prominent pipes than the shell-like leaves of the previous style, which do not, and, owing to their form, could not overlap. You will understand the whole rationale of the construction of such leaves as those from the capitals of the temples of Mars Ultor, and of Jupiter Stator. Each leaf is evidently roughed out with a plane surface, and the whole effect is obtained by scooping out certain parts, and leaving the stalk, pipes, and edges of the leaves, which you can easily detect, to lie in the original plane. And here I may mention the enormous advantage of the work being, we may almost say, designed as well as executed *in situ*. Modern work is generally copied by inartistic hands from a model made in a studio with a light, as likely as not, quite different to that in which the real work will be seen. You cannot examine a scrap of old foliage without feeling that if we are ever again to do work so fresh, vigorous, and beautiful, it must be executed as well as designed by men of acute artistic feeling, and skilled in every artifice of effect. I really believe that there would be no difficulty in the matter if we could only get rid of our modern education and of our stupid methods of separating labour from art.

The proportions of leaves of a capital should be graduated

according to their position. The lower zone of leaves should appear to bind the bell more closely than the upper ones. This drawing from a photograph of the diagonal view of the capital from the temple of Jupiter Olympius will give a very good notion of the complete and reasonable harmony which pervaded every detail of antique work.

Thus far we have considered the general construction of the acanthus, the arrangement of its pipes and eyes, and the lapping over, or non-lapping over, of its leaflets. We will now proceed to notice the form of the edge of the leaflets themselves, and the arrangement of its serrations or lobes ; and of these the variety is infinite. (Plates 17, 18, 19.)

The great majority of Corinthian capitals are composed of what is called the olive acanthus, each leaflet consisting of four, five, or six serrations or tines. The more massive the leaf the fewer are the serrations. You will observe that in the majority of examples the tine next to the eye has a perpendicular direction, and that the central tine or lobe is decidedly predominant ; in the leaflets with four tines, the second ; in those with five or seven, the third and fourth. I have already explained that the surface of the whole leaflet is hollowed ; but each lobe is also hollowed, and the leaflet exactly resembles the inside of a cockle-shell, the edges which are left between the tapering flutes converging towards the central stalk. A rounded lobe will naturally have a rounded fluting, but an angular lobe would have an angular groove.

In small examples of wood-carving, and also in some stone capitals, the leaf is left flat ; a sharp incision from the

angles between the lobes being used to show the radiating lines.

We now come to a more varied compound leaf, which, like all compound leaves, has a predominant centre, with subordinate lobes; and this arrangement admits of any degree or complexity and variety. As a general rule, a leaf with intricate serrations has its surface treated in a broad and simple manner. Its pipes are delicately marked, and its form is indicated by subtle gradations of shadow.

The rationale of the treatment of the edge of a leaf is very simple; if it comes against a shadow, it must be exhibited by light; if against a light background, it must be exhibited by shadow. You will now see why the edges of so many of the cinquecento examples are round, massive, and, perhaps you may think, a little lumpy; it is only so that the edge could catch enough light to exhibit it effectively. If the edge comes against a light background, it is necessary to bend the top of the leaflet sufficiently forward to get a shadow, which will enable you to show the edge dark against the light behind.

In Plates 17, 18, 19, are shown examples of the leading types of the acanthus. It is hardly necessary for me to say that, given one leaflet and one eye, we ought to be able to construct the whole capital. There is not only a perfect harmony between every part, but a constant repetition. The severer the style the less is variety admissible. Never be afraid of repetition in good architecture; you will find that those capitals whose leaves are made up of leaflets having throughout the same number of lobes, are generally the finest. Variation is only proper in the weaker and more complex styles. There remains one point, which perhaps may not have occurred to you, namely, the direction in which the leaves turn over. The curling over of the top of the leaf is of course symmetrical; it turns neither to the right nor the left; it is at right angles to the general plane of the leaf; and the turn-over of each subordinate leaflet also is nearly at right angles to the general direction of its surface, so that a leaf with a perfectly flat surface would have leaflets turning

over in the same direction as the central top; but cinquecento capitals have frequently no more than one leaf at each angle: as each occupies nearly a quarter of a circle, the curvature of its plan would naturally cause the sides of the leaf to turn over obliquely. You must not, however, conclude that the surface of each leaf or leaflet lies rigidly in one direction; it frequently has a beautiful twist, not unlike the blade of a screw propeller; but be very cautious that you do not fall too much in love with this deviation from rectitude. If you pass your hand along the face of the leaflets of the Trajan scroll, you will perceive the beauty of this double curvature, and at the same time the moderation of its extent.

Next to the foliage of the capital, we may consider that which so often occurs on the soffits of modillions and brackets. You should remember it is the *back* of the leaf that we have been considering with its projecting ribs. If we bend a serrated leaf backwards, the openings between each leaflet will be widened, and we get in this way a leaf somewhat thistly in character, but admirably adapted for effect in the position for which it is wanted. On modillions, the stalks and pipes are generally very prominent, but on renaissance brackets you will observe that the surface of the leaf is almost always left broad; its pipes delicately marked, while its outline is cut boldly and suddenly down to the ground. On the bases of candelabra, &c., we have the *face* of the leaf; the leaflets which before were separated here overlap, and lie flatter than they do in examples which are upright, and this gives the whole leaf a thin and flimsy appearance; its edge is more varied, and often rounded to prevent its thinness being apparent, and being nearer the eye it is more finished as well as more varied than the leaves on soffits.

Of foliage on panels and pilasters, we have in the Museum an infinite profusion of the most beautiful designs. Owing to their purely ornamental character, and to the lowness of their relief, the severity which was so essential in a capital, is no longer necessary; and the most playful fancy, the most

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exquisite refinement and grace, and the greatest variety, are all welcomed with pleasure. The effect of the principal leaves is generally produced by one or other of two systems of treatment. Either the leaf is upright, and every artifice we have before noticed is brought into play to exhibit its form; or it droops over, its top or back, being kept broad and simple, receives the fullest effect of the falling light, while its serrations are made out by the most vigorous and incisive shadows below. (Plate 18.) But, as a general rule, the foliage of pilasters is almost always upwards, but very few leaves bending over or downwards.

It is very necessary that you should study the important law of Gradation (Plate 19). Subtly expressed in the severer examples, it is obvious enough in foliage, which is more purely ornamental; some leaves graduate upwards, some downwards, some culminate in the middle, but in all the serrations are arranged in progressive order.

A comparison of cinquecento foliage with natural leaves will show how completely the old artists had mastered the *principles* of nature. Modern artists arrange a few *literal transcripts* in a loose and inartistic way, and deride their great predecessors because their work is, they say, unnatural; but the fact is that they are as ignorant of nature as they are of art, and can only make imitative copies of detail; while the work of the old men, considering its material, position, and purpose, is almost as natural as nature herself.

Although the acanthus for the higher styles, and a few other types of more ornamental foliage, have been brought to such artistic perfection, that it is almost impossible to improve them, and most other forms selected from nature appear deficient in some qualities which these fulfil, the adaptation of new vegetable forms should occupy our attention more than it does; and I hope that before long we may add varieties to our list of ornamental leaves which may have merits apart from their novelty, a quality which you should never allow to lead you astray. More bad ornament is,I believe, done from a desire to produce something new, than from any other motive.

It is useless to describe the varied forms of leaves, which

can be illustrated so much better by drawings, and I will merely remark that an examination of the best examples of antique and renaissance art, and of Nature herself, will show that the sides of leaves are not only more straight, but more parallel, than a reference to Albertolli, or to modern examples, would lead you to suppose.

The subject of foliage will be dealt with more fully in future lectures; we will now return to our classified list of the elements of ornament.

Flowers afford fewer suggestions for ornament than might at first be supposed, and *rosettes* are oftener made up of leaves than of actual flower petals.[1] The variety of rosettes is almost inexhaustible. (Plate 20). The soffit of the arches at St. Paul's will show their effective use, and afford numerous examples. Besides symmetrical rosettes, there are other spiral, viewed sideways, &c., which occur frequently to vary the flowing scroll-work of stalks and leaves. The rosette in the Medicis scroll, and the varieties in the spandril, by Stevens, afford valuable patterns and suggestions. (Plate 21.)

Berries, seedpods, beans, and heads of corn have all been conventionalized and used ornamentally, and, no doubt, many other natural forms might readily be pressed into the service.

Festoons are of many sorts. The symmetrically disposed leaves, the same bound round with fillets, the leaves disposed in knots, or starting from convential knobs (Plate 20); leaves enclosing masses of fruit, and sometimes a bundle of stalks, not unlike the fasces of the Lictors, are all used to give variety and mass to this most effective form of ornament.

Festoons, like everything else, must be ordered according to the severity of the architecture which they adorn. The florid naturalistic wreaths, or festoons, can only be used in the looser and more playful styles.

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[1] Botanists regard inflorescence as a complex modification of foliation, and as differing from ordinary leaf growth rather in complexity and arrangement than in kind. It is interesting to observe this correspondence between ornamental instinct and scientific insight.

The next great order of elements is composed of *things*, such as *pots*, *vases*, *labels*, *pateræ*, &c., and these, on account of their human relationship, take a higher rank than vegetable, or even many animal forms. Indeed, I am not at all sure that they ought not to come next to man himself. *Tools*, *musical instruments*, *trophies*, *arms*, *helmets*, and *shields*, *candelabra*, *altars*, *medallions*, and *masks*, *sceptres*, *fasces*, *ribbons;* the *thyrsus* and *architectural details* all form ornament of a very high order in Roman, Cinquecento, and I may also add, in Oriental art as well.[1] (Plate 22.) Witness the frequent and effective use of Chinese symbols and still-life on Oriental china.

The fourth series of elements consists of animal forms, beginning with *shells*, *horns*, *skulls*, *claws*, *wings*, *snakes*, *lizards*, *fishes*, more especially *dolphins*, *birds*, *eagles*, *owls* (plate 23), *griffins*, *horses*, *lions*, or parts of these combined with foliage, and other ornamental forms, and lastly,

The Human Figure:

1st. Parts combined with other ornament.

2nd. Symmetrically disposed.

3rd. Composition of the figure without backgrounds.

4th. With backgrounds, but evenly distributed, and so on through the whole scale of art; and here I may explain the constant use of *boys* or *amorini* in ornament. They are simply small humans of a fuller and plumper growth than men; they elevate the rank of the ornament without making it too serious, for ornament should seldom be serious and never laboured, it should be the light playful easy work of skilled artists.

Italian ornament was quite good enough for its place, and the supply of it was practically inexhaustible. It freely pervaded all the uses of life, and every object was made beautiful by its spontaneous and cheap application; but modern ornament is often so highly finished, that it is not only ineffective, but is also too expensive to have more than a very limited application.

[1] Critics gravely assert that such things, more especially architecture, ought not to be represented at all. We seem to have reached a climax in the philosophy of art, at which the only thing at all certain is, that no one knows anything about it except those who *don't* do it.

LECTURE VII.

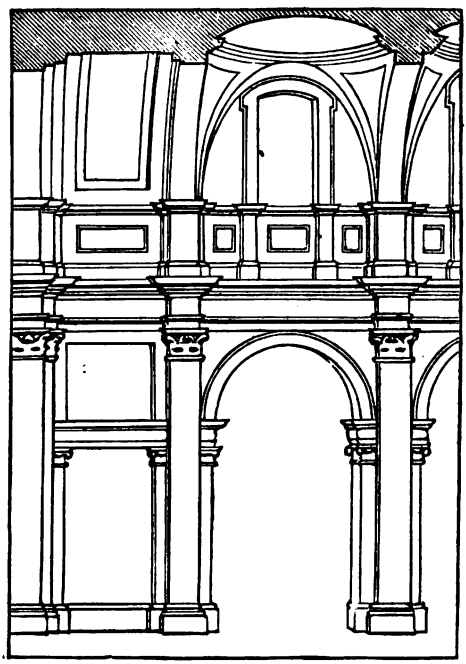
THE PROPER DISTRIBUTION OF ORNAMENT.

YOU will observe that the ornamental elements which I described and classified in my last lecture are arranged according to their ornamental as well as organic rank; but besides this, there is a gradation in the treatment of each object from the severely conventional to the simply imitative; for instance, the treatment of a leaf may range from a stone bracket, the form of which is suggested by, rather than copied from, nature, to a direct transcript from some leaf with all its individual details of form and colour; but, as a general rule, the higher the organic form, the less does it lend itself to conventional treatment.

The next step in the study of ornamental art, and, perhaps, the most important of all, is to know the proper relative positions of the different sorts of ornament, and where to treat an object conventionally and where imitatively. The key to this difficulty will be found in architecture; and this is not to be wondered at when we consider that architecture is the best thought out development of ornamental art; the most stately, compact, ordered, and soundest art. It is the result of the accumulated taste and experience of the great men of all ages; while the influence of painting is confined to

those who are admitted to the inner precincts of public or private galleries. Architecture rears her stately form before all; and so universal is her influence, that it is impossible for any except those in a state of primitive ignorance to evade it. Accordingly, we find that not only buildings, but cabinets, boxes, cassoni, clock-cases, picture-frames, furniture, and all square forms, are obviously treated architecturally; and that even vases, looking-glasses, handles of knives and daggers, and other irregular forms, are not free from its all-pervading influence.

Architecture will form the subject of a series of lectures, and I have already pointed out to you many of its leading principles, but it will best serve our purpose here to take some example of advanced architecture, and pointing out its several parts, show the principle which should regulate the ornamentation of each.



Now, what is the first thing that strikes one in such an example as this? It is that those parts which are practically and æsthetically essential are emphasized by mouldings, or by using material of a higher or more compact nature than in the less essential parts. For instance, if this composition were executed in stone and brick, the pilasters, architraves, cornices, and mouldings generally would be in stone, the spandrils and panels of brick; and this gives us the key to the proper position of ornament; the less essential a space is

architecturally, the less severe and conventional need be its ornamentation.[1]

Reverting to our diagram of the scale of art, and to the classified list of ornamental elements, we have only to arrange the several parts of a building on a corresponding method, according to what we may call their architectural rank, and we have the solution of all our difficulties.

The most essential parts of all will be left plain, and this is the best and severest of all ornament; it is not only quite unexceptionable, but if other parts are highly ornamented, it is by contrast the most beautiful; besides, the highest perfection of ornamental art is when the thing is beautiful of itself, without any adventitious aid. The shaft of a column of the severer orders cannot be improved by any ornamentation, but in the more florid styles the straight line of flutes and reeds may be appropriately used. The plinth and base of a column, and, indeed, the basement all round a building, should in all cases be plain, and I need hardly say that the lower parts of a building are more essential than the upper, which could not exist but for them; accordingly, we generally find they are the plainest and most severe. I have already pointed out the ornament proper for mouldings, and have only here to note that the plain surfaces which are most essential are ornamented with straight lines; ornament on the bed-moulds which support and are subordinate to them is less simple; while that of the cymatium, which is an ornamental member, is still more florid.

We will now proceed to the subordinate order, which may very appropriately be more florid than the principal one. The pilaster might even be panelled; and here let me explain the rationale of panelling. It is nothing more than the architectural principle applied to the parts of a building. Take, for instance, a pilaster or a door, if the surface of these is left flush,

[1] There is a mechanical fitness in this æsthetic principle. The essential parts of a design are those on which its strength and security depend, either in reality or in appearance, and these must be maintained in apparent integrity, with the alternative of suggesting structural weakness.

each part is equally essential, architecturally; but directly we panel them, and the styles are emphasized by mouldings, their architectural value is, as it were, enhanced at the expense of the enclosed panel. The one must be left plain or decorated in the severest manner, while the other would bear a more advanced style of ornament, though in the case of a pilaster, it should always be to some extent firm and symmetrical. If painted there should be no recession of background, and if modelled the ornament should be, as it were, imposed; it would not be right to melt the outline into the ground, thus destroying the apparent reality of the surface; and, accordingly, we find ornament is severely defined according to its architectural position. In a spandril, for instance, the solidity of which is not architecturally necessary, the modelling may here melt into the ground, there be more prominent. In short, there may be much greater variety of relief than in a pilaster, while a still greater licence is allowed to painting, because the surface remains obvious to the sense, though there may be on it a pictorial recession of the background; but the more nearly this pictorial recession is illusive, the less ought it to be used on those parts which are architecturally essential, or the greater the architectural value of any surface, the less varied should be the relief upon it.

The same rule applies to the organic rank of the elements of which the ornament is composed. The higher organic forms should be used in the less essential parts, and they may be treated pictorially in a degree varying according to their position, from diagrams severely designed and composed, or flat bas-reliefs, up to picturesque compositions, in which all the resources of art are used to give force and dramatic effect —in short, the less essential is the surface, the more may the decoration on it lean towards the imitative pole of the scale of art.

The more a space is enclosed with styles and mouldings, the more appropriately can it be decorated pictorially. For example, the spaces between the ribs of a ceiling may be decorated in a more florid and pictorial manner than would be proper if the whole roof were barrel-vaulted, for then each

square foot of the surface would be equally essential. The decoration of the surface of such a domical apse as that in the theatre of the Museum should be of a character more severe than would be necessary if it were ribbed and panelled; but if these ribs and mouldings were painted, it would also justify or excuse a pictorial treatment, as we see in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel; the vault of which is plain, though it is divded into panels by architectural details, which exist only in chiaroscuro, and not in actual substance.

This then is the theory of the proper architectural distribution of ornament, and you will see how completely it is in harmony with the practice of the old masters, and how narrow and one-sided is the theory now so much in vogue that all ornament should be flat, and how small a residuum of truth it contains. Indeed, if it were true, all decorative art would be reduced to mere diagrams. The modern theory is, however, not without its advantages; it is easily taught and comprehended, and dispenses with such tedious and unprofitable studies as anatomy, chiaroscuro, or of colour worthy of the name. One night's study of it has set up many a critic with "principles" for his life. It is plausible, and has only to be loudly asserted to influence the thoughtless, but it is certainly surprising to find men who ought to know better, not only adopting it as a guide for themselves, but using it like a small tape rule, with which they measure and condemn the works of men of the most profound knowledge, experience, and power, thus vainly striving by means of a shallow dogma to keep abler men than themselves within the narrow limits of their own capacities.

The adherence to the theory of architectural distribution varies according to the severity of the style, and in ornamental work is still more lax.

I cannot too often impress upon you that architecture as distinguished from mere building, and indeed all art, has to deal with appearances. Appearances may and should, in a great measure, correspond with the reality, but if they do not, the decorative treatment must be guided by the architecture alone. For instance, in the side of a room, which is divided

into panelled spaces by pilasters, the panels may be treated pictorially, and with receding backgrounds in proportion to the deepness of the styles and mouldings which enclose them, although a careful examination of the structure of the house might betray the fact that those particular wall spaces were *structurally* of the highest importance. This leads me to the consideration of ceilings, which may be treated on the panelled principle without any impropriety arising from the fact that there may be a floor above: we have only to deal with what can be seen at one time.

One of the numerous critics who abound in the Department of Science and Art, and take so much trouble to teach me my business, laid down a law for my guidance about ceilings which had the benefit of simplicity, and of being easy to carry out. He said that ornament of any kind, but more especially pictures, were out of place on a ceiling; it was disagreeable to look at them, and altogether wrong in principle. Now that is a very plausible theory, but it so happens, that all decorative artists have invariably seized upon ceilings for the display of all the resources of art, and I should say that for one decorated wall you will find half-a-dozen decorated ceilings; for you get a fair field on a ceiling, whereas a wall space is usually occupied by furniture, windows, &c., and as I hope you will all some day be asked to paint a ceiling, and are sure, at all events, to wish to do so, we will, notwithstanding our friend's theory, proceed to inquire into the principles which should guide us in our work; and here we shall again find the architectural law will lead us to the true solution of our difficulties. The ceiling is either plain or panelled; if quite plain, the surface is uniformly essential, and accordingly the ornament on it should be evenly distributed. The relief, or rather the recession, should be no more than is necessary to enable you to represent the objects depicted on it. A heavy treatment is almost inadmissible, and we see at once how appropriate were the ancient arabesques; they are light, evenly distributed, fanciful, happy ornament; if subjects were introduced they were panelled, or represented as hanging in picture frames; and in this way, picturesque groups, and

even landscapes, added to the interest of the decoration without destroying the architectural importance of the surface.

I may here remark that a great many of the ornamental ceilings which are engraved as flat ceilings, are really the decoration of vaults. A careful examination of the details will show you that in many instances they would be quite out of place on a flat ceiling; festoons, and pendents or wreaths, for instance, should always hang.

You will find in the library numerous examples of ceilings treated on the panelled principle; a great many are actually panelled, but painted styles will justify the same pictorial treatment of the enclosed space; and for a long time pictures were painted in these panels, which in no way differed from paintings on an upright wall; but there is no question that there is an awkwardness in this system, and to that extent I sympathize with my friend's criticism about ceilings.

It certainly is unpleasant to look at a picture on a ceiling, particularly on a high ceiling; if you get directly under it, which is obviously the right position, for it is only then that you are at right angles to the plane of the picture, it is a breakneck business at the best; but if you are not directly under it, and can see it at a more comfortable angle as far as your neck is concerned, then unfortunately all the figures are distorted. If this produces an unpleasant effect when they are standing upright, the effect is certainly not improved when they appear standing on their heads, as must necessarily occur if you happen to go to the other end of the room. A consideration of the whole scheme of the Sistine ceiling will, I think, show that Michael Angelo was sensible of these difficulties. A section of the vault of the Sistine Chapel is a flat ellipse. Now it is quite clear that the difficulties I have stated do not occur with regard to the figures which are painted on the sides of the vault, which would naturally be treated as a continuation of the side walls. Michael Angelo has accordingly allotted to the sides more than their proper share of the central space, and the remainder he has divided into panels, in which the figures are all drawn with their feet towards the altar-end of

the chapel, for in that direction alone would a spectator be supposed to look; and thus he has reduced to a minimum the objection to a pictorial treatment. But on a ceiling which is flat, and in a room in which there is no reason why we should be in one position rather than another, there is no question that the representation of subjects as in an ordinary picture is objectionable in practice, and hardly to be defended in theory; and these considerations led to a gradual change in the whole treatment of ceilings, beginning with a compromise, by which the old method was retained, but some of the principal figures were partially foreshortened; then in the selection of subjects which could be seen with equal advantage from any point of view; and, lastly, by representing figures as they would actually appear if seen through a hole in the ceiling. Prophets, apostles, and martyrs were represented on pedestals, while the mid-air was peopled with the whole Host of Heaven, or the gods of profane mythology were seen sitting on the clouds, and all the resources of foreshortening and perspective were used to give reality to the scene (the more improbable or impossible, the more necessary is it to make a scene appear real), and the whole surface was destroyed; the object was to destroy it as much as possible, and to give a limitless vision of the heaven above, and all our laws ceased to restrain the artists within due bounds. They are as free as the air they attempt to depict in the place of the ceiling. The more illlusive their work, the less is even distribution necessary, and all the laws of decoration are merged in the full licence of pictorial art. But a greater evil arose from the necessity of limiting the subject to mythological or allegorical scenes, which afforded a reasonable excuse for peopling the heavens with a multitude of flying figures and amorini, and this resulted in endless and mindless repetitions —a florid, unquiet, and meretricious style.

Intimately connected with the recession of the background is the degree of relief, not only in sculpture but in painting. In sculpture, the relief depends as much, if not more, on the qualities necessary to make the work visible in the particular light in which it is placed, as it does on the degree of recession

allowable in the composition, and no great degree of actual recession should ever be allowed.

The panels of the Ghiberti gates seem to me to have exceeded the proper limit in this respect, and are unsatisfactory from their too irregular surface; and without being pedantic, I cannot help feeling that the panels of an external door should still remain obviously solid and compact. The recession of the ground should be that which is as much drawn as modelled. The skill with which the two arts are, as it were, combined may be seen in numerous examples in the Museum, and it is of this sort of recession that the architectural theory will give you the measure.

With regard to bas-reliefs, I may state what is obvious enough if we consider the matter. The relief throughout should be proportional; for instance, if the extreme relief allowed for the bas-relief of a full-sized head, the real depth of which was six inches, were one inch, each part would project one-sixth of the actual projection. This is simple enough; but when, as is sure to be the case in groups, some part of a figure is in front of another, while another part of it comes, as it were, suddenly over a hole in the background, are we then to adhere to the same proportion of relief? To this I say, not if it looks obviously wrong. You must make a compromise, and change imperceptibly from one scale to another. Heads which actually project, notwithstanding that the bodies may be in low relief, should sometimes be modelled in the round. This is a matter which must be settled by the taste of the artist, taking into consideration the points from which the composition is to be seen. If such compositions as those from the Certosa could only be looked at directly from the front, I see no objection to them: they are, as it were, pictures modelled in layers, and very skilfully done they are; but nothing can well be more ludicrous when they are seen at all from one side. In the Elgin frieze adherence to theory is tempered by common sense, and you cannot do better than study the way in which the sudden transition from a very slight to a very great recession of background is managed.

Rounded forms are only properly exhibited by a side light.

Accordingly, we find in the Elgin frieze, and in hundreds of examples of ornament, particularly on soffits, and, in short, anywhere where the light is evenly diffused, it is necessary to leave the general mass of the object, be it figure or ornament, as flat as possible, cutting in the outline suddenly.

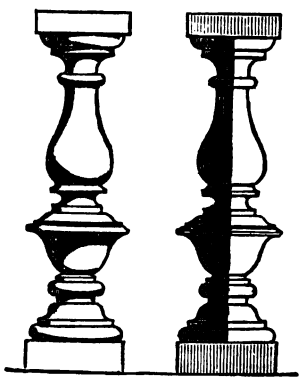
As an instance of the ill effects of a more rounded treatment, you have only to look at a panel of my own, facing the Ceramic Gallery, which is entirely in shadow. The ornament on this panel, though actually in very high relief, is wanting in that effect which proper skill would have produced with a much lower relief. We learn by mistakes, and having mentioned this one of my own I will now direct your attention to the lunettes recently put up in the refreshment rooms, which, though vigorously modelled, and doubtless exceedingly picturesque and effective in a side light, are so wanting in effect in the diffused reflected light in which they are placed, as to be almost incomprehensible. The leaves which so often occur on the soffits of brackets, in cinquecento art, are examples of the proper treatment, a treatment which is very useful out of doors as well as in, for though the sun gives us shadows which show off rounded forms, we know there *are* days on which he does not make his appearance, and on a grey, cloudy day the light is evenly diffused; and to get any effect it is necessary to cut the perpendicular lines very deeply. The leaf should be left as broad and simple as possible, its outline and serrations marked by sudden shadows and projecting lights. So far, then, for ornament in relief; but when we come to painting it is necessary to know the rationale of shadow before we can understand the architectural distribution of its different qualities, and I shall endeavour to give a concise account of its facts and principles.

I need hardly say that shadow is the absence of light. If the eye were in the position of the light, and you were to take a rod of charcoal, or any other material that would mark with its side as well as its point, and were to pass it over the apparent outline of any object, it would leave a line which would coincide with the edge of the shadow; in other words, the edge of a shadow is an outline from another point of view;

and in this way you can always determine the exact position of the edge of a shadow. The difference between tone and actual shadow can also be detected by holding a pencil in such a position that it casts a shadow on the doubtful part; if the shadow is perceptible it is obvious that the part on which it falls had been previously, in some measure, however slightly, illuminated.

Those parts of an object which lie at right angles to the light, receive the fullest share of its rays, and are in what is called high light, while those surfaces which recede from it are more scantily illuminated, according to the angle they make with the light; and the relative degree of light on every part of an object could always be determined with mathematical precision by making accurate sections, and drawing evenly distributed rays from the point of light.

A very important point with regard to shadow is the proportion it should bear to the light. If you have equal light and equal dark, not only is the object cut up, and artistically smaller than by any other arrangement, but the shadow itself represents the form so badly that it can scarcely be said to represent it at all. Take for instance the moon when it is exactly half-moon. The edge of the shadow is a perfectly straight line, which can hardly be considered a characteristic representation of a sphere; or take a baluster—if the light falls at right angles to the line of vision, and perfectly horizontally, the edge of the shadow on even so complicated a form as this will be perfectly straight, and therefore the worst that could possibly be. Again, a light which is exactly behind the spectator will give no shadow at all, and the object will, in a pictorial sense, be wanting in solidity as well as form; it will appear too flat; but as we gradually change the direction of the light from one or other of these positions the shadow will more and more express the form, and the most expressive of all will



be half way between the two when the shadow is cast from a light which makes an angle of 45° with the line of vision. It is necessary to observe that it should be at an angle of 45° horizontally as well as perpendicularly; accordingly we find that this direction of light is adopted not only in architectural and mechanical drawings (in which it enables the amount of relief to be actually measured, thus making one drawing do the work of two), but in all art generally, for it not only exhibits the form to the best advantage, but the shadow bears, *in quantity*, a very agreeable proportion to the light. The next thing I would call your attention to is the form of shadows, particularly on the human figure. The outline of an object is, as a general rule, its simplest contour; the form itself is really more varied. When you take a walk in a hilly country, and see perhaps the long sweep of sky line, how surprised you are at the variety of ground that lies between; what unsuspected valleys you come upon. The fact is, that the outline is made up of the overlapping outlines of many forms in different planes. Drapery again affords a more marked example of the same law. Folds which have deep grooves, and present a great complexity of surface, as they approach the contour and meet other folds, form together a flowing and often continuous line. The works of the greatest men exhibit a perception of this law of simplicity of outline. The edge of shadow, which betrays and expresses the more complicated intermediate forms,[1] will necessarily be less simple than the outline itself; but it should, in large art, be as simple as possible. You should detect and emphasize those outlines of shadow which the best express the character of the figure, and you will find on a Hercules square and vigorous forms; on a woman oval forms, bounded by gentle curves; on a thin and meagre man the edge of the shadow will be thin, angular and mean; but as a general rule it is better to omit angular and spiky forms of shadow,

[1] For this reason the outline and quality of the edge of the shadow is, of all studies connected with art, by far the most important, and, I may add, the most neglected.

they are quite exceptional, and interfere with the breadth both of the light and the shade.

It is, no doubt, philosophically true that shadow is the absence of light, and the influence of light preponderates so much, that we are apt to forget that there are similar but minor influences from everything else; but you will the better be able to comprehend the rationale of appearances if you regard an object as affected not only by the light but by all its surroundings—everything, whether light, dark, or colour, sending forth rays of its own towards all things within its reach. If colour, however faint, is perceptible to the eye, it emits, you may be sure, similar streams on to the blindest objects; whether their effect is perceptible depends on the reflective power of their surfaces. That the edge of a shadow is the darkest, is the natural result of that part of an object being less exposed to reflections from the most directly illuminated objects behind it, and these reflections will most directly influence the part which we may call the antipodes of the light. Shadows which are cast on to the light side of an object are very dark because they are not only deprived of direct light, but receive no reflections, the dark side of all neighbouring objects being necessarily towards them, and in a studio lighted by a small window the whole surrounding of the light is dark. I need hardly say that the colour of shadows depends on their surroundings, and that the walls of a studio produce the same, but less marked, effect that the intense blue of the sky does out of doors, and those parts of an object which are free from the more dominating influence of direct light are tinged with their respective colours. You should remember, too, that the position of high lights depends on the texture of the object. On a perfectly dead surface high lights remain locally fixed on those parts of it which lie at right angles to the light; but if the surface is at all shiny, then the high lights will vary according to the position of the spectator, and so it is with reflections.

All these and similar phenomena are obvious to even the obtusest intellect, if it is only used; but the imitative method now in vogue so deadens all intellectual effort, that I have

frequently found the manufacturers of the most prodigious drawings entirely ignorant of the simplest principles of light and shade, and this must be my apology for mentioning such obvious, and one would think such well-known, facts and principles as these.

The next and by far the most important point with regard to shadow is its quality, and the quality of its edge. The smaller and more intense the light, the more cutting, defined, and dark is the shadow. The larger and less intense the light, the softer is the edge and the less is the contrast between the light and shade.

I am almost ashamed to state such obvious truisms, but these simple facts are the key to a knowledge of all the varieties of art, and to the appropriate use of its different qualities.

A light which is at once small and intense, is objectionable artistically for exactly the same reason that we condemned the straight line of the shadow in the half-moon : it does not show the form. Whatever the shape of the object, or however rounded its contours, the edge of the shadow is so cutting and defined, that it would be a more appropriate representation of an actual angle or edge, while the unity and breadth of the object are destroyed by its being divided into two distinct parts without any intervening gradations.

On the other hand, if the light is too evenly diffused, there is not enough shadow to define form, or sufficient depth of it to make the lights luminous. Art ranges between these two extremes. The broad evenly diffused light is proper for ideal art; the concentrated intensity of a smaller light gives qualities which are more brilliant, forcible, and picturesque, but at the same time smaller, less noble, and less imaginative. The natural result of the first is that the shadows will be comparatively pale, the edges soft and melting into the light; and as a large diffused light, regarded as daylight or light from the sky, is necessarily a distant light, the difference in its illuminating power on the nearer or more distant parts of a composition is quite inappreciable ; but the smaller the light, the more is it localized, and though the light seen through a

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window in reality comes from the sky, the smaller the opening, the more are the conditions of the light reduced to those of a candle placed at the aperture; and those objects which are near to it are more intensely illuminated than those which are more distant, in inverse proportion to the square of their distance; and thus we get some parts of a composition treated as lights, and others, though in the light, so scantily illuminated that they melt gradually into the shade, and the composition becomes less evenly distributed and less adapted for mural decoration, though it becomes more pictorial, sparkling, and picturesque.

Practically, nothing is more effective than a system of broad shadow, which is not so dark as to destroy the unity of the object, but at the same time dark enough to make the lights luminous; the lights should be lowered as little as possible by half tints, and the shadows kept free from too many reflections. The background of objects treated in pale shadow may be darker than both shadow and light; but if the shadow is dark, the ground had better be darker than the light, but lighter than the shadow, otherwise the shadow will cling to the ground. The great object of the mural painter, and indeed of all painters, should be to exhibit the form clearly at first sight; there should be no hesitation or confusion in the spectator's mind. The shadows should be as simple as possible; projecting irregular patches that cut too much and too distractedly into the light should be avoided, and high lights should be most sparingly used.

These seem to be the principal characteristics of the art of Raphael. Each figure stands out clear, forcible, defined; but these qualities were not sufficient for Michael Angelo; he required even a greater breadth,—an exhibition of the form of every part of an object, a greater diffusion of light. Accordingly we find that both in colour and chiaroscuro there are no striking contrasts between his lights and shadows. The one was blended imperceptibly into the other, and those parts that were in shadow were light enough to exhibit all the modelling of the form; in fact, he went over the whole surface of his figures exactly as a modeller would have done, and each left

his hand not only perfect in form, but as large as it could be. It was not cut up into two parts, the light and the shade. There was no striving after force, no focussing, all was bathed in a broadly diffused majestic light. It is impossible to conceive anything more appropriate at once for ideal art and mural decoration, not only on moulded spandrils and panels, but on the broad essential surfaces of walls or ceilings; for though there might be depth in the composition, the difference in tone between the near and distant parts was not so great as to destroy that even distribution which is architecturally necessary. *Focussing* is essentially at variance with even distribution, and it is therefore more pictorial than decorative. *Force* is bringing shadow up to the light. *Sparkle* is concentrated light brought into direct contact with concentrated dark, and is essentially a small quality.

The normal colour of shadows is yellow or orange, and the reason why glaze and transparent colours are necessary in deep shadowed pictures is that you can get a transparent pigment very deep which yet retains this orange colour. If you attempt to mix a tint in opaque colour, to match even so cool a pigment as raw umber rubbed on transparently, you will find that it is necessary to use intense yellows. The deeper the tone of a picture the more necessary is it to have a glazed surface, while opaque pigments render with greater propriety the greyer shadows of mural decoration.

All things are singularly in harmony. On the one side we have large, simple, broad contours—absence of detail—very perfect distribution—shadows so light that they do not destroy the unity of the figure, and yet sufficient to exhibit relief and form—a dead surface which remains obviously a wall. On the other hand we have lights focussed—shadows deeper, and brought up in some parts with force to the lights—richer colour—complexity of detail—less even distribution, (for some parts of the composition are enhanced at the expense of others)—a surface more shiny and less and less mural—and generally less breadth of treatment, and a tendency to pettiness. The smaller the work the more are finish and detail necessary; the larger, the broader and simpler should it be.

Brilliancy, depth of colour, force, and sparkle, are essentially smaller in character than what we may call the full even roll of ideal art; but we must not despise such qualities, they are qualities of nature, qualities, too, which are so pregnant with beauty, that when we contemplate a Venetian picture, or one by Rubens or Rembrandt, we feel so impressed with their force and splendour, that we are almost tempted to regard the grander art as a little husky and monotonous; but the truth is, that each quality of art is beautiful in its proper place.

LECTURE VIII.

MATERIAL.

THE subject of my present lecture is *material*. First, as the means or vehicle we use for the imitation of Nature, or the expression of our ideas; the reasons for our selecting this for one purpose and that for another; and lastly, how far design and work should be influenced by the material in which it is executed. First, as to drawing, we ought to think ourselves lucky in having such materials as paper and pencils. They are admirably adapted to our wants. In variety and texture a little care in selection will give us everything we can desire; and care in such matters is well spent. The more minute the work, the finer should be the texture of the paper, the harder and more compact the pencil or chalk; and this applies to all materials. If your work is on a large scale, a very fine appearance is detrimental to its effect; it will be apt to appear hard and tinny: it is almost impossible to avoid a small manner on a very smooth material, and we can detect at a glance a painting on copper. Charcoal, chalk, and pencil give us all we can want for large, medium, and small drawings. The shine of pencil is a defect which is not so objectionable in small drawings—which can readily be held in such a direction that the reflections are avoided—as it would be in larger works.

And here let me repeat what I have said about scale. The more minute the work the more detail there should be in it. A work by Meissonnier, if enlarged, would have too much, not too little, detail. Observe the converse in all great work; all men, whose *spécialité* is detail, paint small pictures, while ideal subjects are treated not only in a large manner, but on a large scale; partly because (as we have seen) all the qualities of art which are in harmony with it can only be properly used in mural decoration, and are intended to be seen from a distance, and partly because the coarser materials lend themselves easily to produce the required effect.

Always remember that large work is to be seen from a distance, and should look right at that distance.

If you draw or paint with your nose close to a large picture, though your work may appear right to you then, when you step back from it, it is sure to be wrong. You will find you have got all your shadows hard and meagre. A drawing of a head the size of life should be as effective at a distance as the head itself, or nearly so; and in painting, unless you have great experience, and know what you are about, you should continually go to the same distance from your work that you are from your model. In academies and crowded schools large drawings should not be attempted, except, perhaps, as a lesson to show the evils that are sure to result. In chalk drawing your great object ought to be to acquire a rapid and effective method of shading, which shall not be rotten. The stippling method is, of course, too tedious for general use. Julien's drawings from the antique are good in some respects, but we could do better by copying some of the drawings of the old masters. I believe a week devoted to this subject would be well spent. Cross-hatching is unsatisfactory; it gives a woolly texture. A general tint laid on by parallel lines is perhaps the best and simplest, but if the lines are too hard, or too far apart, it is difficult to redeem it from flatness. It is very important to define the edge of the shadow clearly, and you will find it a very good plan always to lay in the edge first firmly and clearly. The subsequent filling in will then be easy.

But to return to materials. I have little to say about painting beyond what I have already said about drawing. The smaller the work, the finer the canvas, the pigments, and the brushes. For fine work, a canvas prepared in the modern way is excellent. What we want for medium-sized and large easel pictures, or more accurately speaking, for subjects painted on a large scale (for a head which filled a canvas only 18 inches by 12 would obviously require a totally different treatment to a space twenty times the size filled with small figures), is a rough but uniform texture. But this, simple as it appears, is difficult to get; if the canvas is too lightly primed the colour is apt to sink, and will require frequent painting over before it bears out forcibly; but if it is primed fully, then the roughness of the texture is in a great measure lost. And I cannot but think that this difficulty would in some measure be obviated by priming the canvas at the back. If we stand behind a thinly-primed and thinly-painted canvas, the picture appears almost like a transparency. Now, it is obvious that the light which passes through cannot be reflected; and I believe distemper and fresco owe their brilliant and luminous quality to their solidity, quite as much as to the deadness of their surface. Transparent glazes create and require a smoother surface than is necessary or desirable in opaque pigments; and when a surface is shiny, as is the case with most pictures painted in transparent colours, the light is, we may say, wasted in reflections, and the picture, which can only be seen out of the line of reflection, is, therefore, low in tone; but, besides this, the light has to pass through a transparent glaze twice before it reaches the eye, for it is reflected from the ground beneath. These facts account for the extraordinary lowness of tone which even a slight glaze gives.

On account of their weight, expense, and liability to crack, *panels* are now out of fashion; but they have, at least, the advantage of solidity, and there is something very inviting in their firmness, which seems almost to inspire a corresponding firmness of touch, so that they may be used for larger pictures than the smoothness of their surface would otherwise warrant.

Distemper, owing to the deadness of its surface, is admirably adapted for mural painting, though it is apt to be hard and chalky, and its shadows heavy or cold; but its difficulty is the chief obstacle to its use, a difficulty caused by its change of colour in drying, and the opacity which prevents the drawing or previous work showing through.

Fresco seems to combine every quality that is desirable in mural decoration, except, unfortunately, in this country, permanence. But one cause of its failure in this respect, as well as in some other artistic qualities, is that the surface has been finished almost to a polish—a surface entirely out of character with all the qualities of fresco. It is fresh, luminous, and clean, without being chalky; beside it an oil-picture seems heavy and horny. It is more admirably adapted for rendering all the greater qualities of ideal art than any other material, and anyone who can detect and remedy the causes of its decay will confer a benefit on art and the country.

Painting in ordinary oil-colours on the common plaster of walls and ceiling is not sufficiently practised. It is quite satisfactory, and quite sufficiently permanent. A process called "Spirit Fresco," invented or adopted by Mr. Gambier Parry, promises most satisfactory results, and deserves to be better known than it is. It is certainly a great desideratum to have a method of painting directly on the wall. A canvas, even if it could be perfectly strained, is liable to damp, cobwebs behind it, &c.; and on a ceiling a strained canvas is, of course, impossible, as may be seen at Whitehall. For small plaques, however, paper or canvas may be stuck on in the most solid and permanent manner with white lead; and the advantages of being able to paint at an easel and see one's work before one instead of lying on one's back are not improbably shared by the spectator as well as the painter.

Mosaic is again coming into use, but its principles are not sufficiently understood. There are two sorts of mosaic: in one the subject is especially designed for the material, in the other the mosaicist imitates a painting as accurately as the difficulty of the material will allow.

The larger and coarser the tesseræ the more is it necessary

to make the design specially for them; with minute tesseræ and a very prodigal outlay of time and money it is possible to produce a copy which, at a little distance, will pass for an oil-painting. Such are the mosaics in St. Peter's, while those at Ravenna afford examples of the first.

The *only* advantage of the more finished work is that it is permanent; but this quality is obtained at an enormous price. I ask, "Is it worth it?" You get a permanent but necessarily inferior copy of an oil-picture for ten times the money the oil picture itself has already cost. Now, an oil-picture with ordinary care will last 300 years. Is not that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a great deal too long? I am no advocate for permanence;—it is only desirable with the finest and rarest art. An existence of fifty years, or even less, is quite long enough for the great majority of works of art. To go to an enormous expense for the mere whim of obtaining a permanent but indifferent copy of an indifferent picture seems to me, I confess, a most lamentable waste of money.

With regard to the earlier, coarser, and more conventional treatment, there is more to be said in favour of its revival. It has an artistic value of its own, and can be used on the architecturally essential surfaces of walls and vaults, without in the least impairing their obvious solidity. Indeed, partly from the necessary severity of its treatment, and partly from the tesseræ being imbedded in the wall itself, it has of all materials the most perfect appearance of impacted solidity. The coarser the tesseræ, the more difficult is it to make an appropriate design which shall not be grotesque; but, when made, its execution is comparatively easy. The more conventional the design the more appropriate will be the display of the barbaric splendour of gold and colour. A dead gold background might, perhaps, be admissible in the more finished work, but never that which glitters. To put mosaic in a wooden frame is obviously absurd. It should be imbedded in the wall itself, and its margins and mouldings, if any are shown, should be of a material not less solid than stone.

Tiles are rapidly coming into fashion as a covering and decoration for walls for butchers' and fishmongers' shops, for

refreshment rooms, railway stations and so forth. For the dados in much frequented courts and corridors their use is obvious. A mop or sponge will in a few minutes make the surface perfectly clean and fresh, and in all respects as good as new. For decoration their advantage is not so certain. They are well adapted for panels and friezes of no great depth ; but it is to be feared that the ease and cheapness with which a show can be made by petty builders and decorators, who, as a class, are not very famous for taste, will soon bring them into disrepute. The seams of the tiles, their glazed surface, and their too obvious appearance of a veneer, will prevent their employment for the mural decoration of more extended spaces.

Larger and more solid slabs, which can be made in shapes the edges of which coincide with the principal lines of the composition, may be used for the higher sorts of decoration. The two large plaques by Yvon, at the end of the Keramic Gallery, are manufactured in this way. Owing to their solidity the general surface maintains its flatness, but if the slabs are thin, and particularly if they are of irregular shape, they are apt to curl up when fired, in which case their edges do not coincide, and the effect, particularly in a side light, is very disagreeable,—and it must be remembered that it is only in a side light that a painting on a glazed surface can be properly seen. These difficulties have led to the adoption by Messrs. Minton of an arrangement of small vitrified hexagons, which are so accurately made that their edges exactly coincide. A sufficient number of these to form a slab of moderate dimensions are fimly joined together by a vitrified cement. These slabs fit accurately into others, and thus form a surface of any dimensions. Owing to its serrated edge the joint is not detected, and in its general appearance the work has much of the character and solidity of mosaic.

The great advantage these small hexagonal tesseræ have over tiles is that they adapt themselves without difficulty to curved surfaces, which is an impossibility with tiles, owing to the irregularity of their warping when fired ; and thus they can come into use for vaults, domes, and domical

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spandrils and apses—spaces, perhaps, more than any others suitable for decoration.

The promoters of this material seem to me to lay too much stress on its having the appearance and impasto of oil, and pride themselves on being able to imitate qualities which are out of place in mural decoration. As the material is essentially mural, they would do well to confine their energies to the production of mural qualities. The material will, I believe, be found quite as suitable for these as it has already proved itself to be for the lesser qualities of pictorial art.

Having thus obtained a solid uniform indestructible material, which can be adapted to curved as well as flat surfaces, it only remains to paint upon it with permanent colours; and these colours, it is asserted, are so little changed by the fire, that an artist, wholly inexperienced in pot-painting, will have no more difficulty in using them than the ordinary oil colours on canvas. If this be so, we have the solution of all our difficulties, and I can only express a hope that so valuable an invention may become generally available to artists.

Hitherto the secrets of pot-painting have been so jealousy guarded by their proprietors, that the art is entirely under their control, and practically no one can paint in pot colours unless he is in the employ and under the immediate direction of the manufacturer. I have no wish to depreciate the chemical knowledge, the skill, or industry necessary to the production of good glazes and pigments, or to grudge them a proper remuneration; but I believe the narrow-minded jealousy with which these secrets are guarded is a mistaken policy, and that if they were thrown open, not only would there be a revival, among artists of eminence, of decorative painting, much to the benefit of art and the enlargement of its borders, but I believe that even the humblest branch of pot manufacture would share in the interest and splendour which would be given to its highest development.

Although *Sgraffito*, or *Sgraffiatura*, may, perhaps, be more appropriately classed among architectural processes and materials, it seems so adapted for use in interior as well as exterior mural decoration, that I venture to mention it here.

As the process is not usually known, I will briefly describe it. What is called the "floating" coat of ordinary plaster, which is usually three-quarters of an inch thick, having been applied to the wall, a layer of black, or any dark-coloured plaster, is then laid about a quarter of an inch thick, and above this another layer much thinner and lighter in colour. Having prepared a charcoal drawing of the figures or ornament you intend to execute, you either trace it or print it on the wet plaster; with a sharp knife you then cut through the upper layer of plaster, and, scraping it away, expose the black wherever you want it to appear. In this way you can execute in a very effective manner any ornament or subject which can be represented in two tints; by using three layers more complicated effects can be produced. Under the direction of Mr. Cole, who is always anxious to revive the varied arts which made Italy so glorious in the days of the Renaissance, I have made many experiments in Sgraffito; these may be seen on the back of the New Science Schools at South Kensington. It is a most fascinating process—cheap, effective, and, I believe, durable. There is one modification of it which seems to me to promise success. By laying a thicker outer coat we have been able to carve it almost like a cameo. A frieze of amorini so executed may be seen close to the ground; and I cannot help thinking that Sgraffito, and the many modifications of which it is capable, are well worth the attention of decorative artists and architects.

Having thus noticed the principal materials used for mural decoration, it will be necessary, before we consider the variety and profusion of material used in ornamental art generally, to say a few words on the dogmas and assertions which are now so popular. Should each material be treated in a manner peculiar to itself? Should the material control the artist, or the artist the material? Is it wrong to imitate work in one material in another material? Now, there are no subjects on which the law is laid down more positively than on this: all design is to be in strict accordance with the material. But I presume that even the most ardent advocates of "true principles" would concede that a statue, whether in marble, bronze, wood,

or terra-cotta, must necessarily be treated in the same way. I do not mean in little details of hair, and so forth. One material might be more difficult than another; but in all the artist would aim, and rightly aim, at the same object, wholly irrespective of the material, viz., the imitation of Nature. It would be admitted that in this nothing is to be conceded to the material; but in decorative art it is asserted that every design should exhibit undoubted marks of the material for which it is intended. That a design ought to be in accordance with the properties of the material is a proposition which would be accepted by all. But then comes the question: would it be possible to execute and use a design which was obviously at variance with the properties of the material? and if it is done, and answers its purpose, is not that a proof that it is in accordance with the properties of the material? Take as an extreme instance a projecting bracket from which we wished to suspend a lamp. Would it be wrong to make such a thing of stone? and if so, why? The answer will be, because it would break. To which I reply, why need we trouble our selves about a theory which condemns only the impossible?

All art has to deal with appearances alone. If a bracket looks too frail for the weight it has to support, it is æsthetically too thin, though practically it may be strong enough to support twenty times the weight. But the dogmas about material are not put forth on these grounds; "true principle" men are not content with appearances, all must be real; and if reality and appearance do not coincide there must be falsehood somewhere.

But to revert to our bracket. Supposing we could obtain stone of remarkable tenacity, the more tenacious it was the thinner and more elongated should we be able to make the form of our bracket. But, it will be stated, you must not take exceptional but general characteristics; you should take some characteristic which is peculiar to the material, and, in short, exaggerate that to the exclusion of those characteristics which it may possess in common with other materials. The line of argument is this:—The characteristic, say, of iron is malleability and ductility combined with strength and stiffness;

therefore it ought to be wrought, and all designs for it ought obviously to show that it is wrought. To this I reply, that if its qualities are so admirably adapted for its being wrought, in the ordinary course of affairs it *will* be wrought. In the long run the economies prevail, and uses are not thrown away. But when it is argued that it is wrong to cast iron because its ductility and malleability are not made use of to the fullest, then I say that is also a question of use. If cast-iron is found to be useful and economical, who are these philosophers, that we are to attend to their veto? Of course practical people do not attend to these men at all, who, however, address themselves to artists; and, unfortunately, an exaggerated view of the necessities of material threatens to limit the liberty and scope of decorative art.

If wrought-iron is to be used, let the artist make such a design as the smith will delight to execute; but if that should be too dear, or many of the same pattern should be wanted, I cannot myself see the sin of having them made of cast-iron, provided they answer their purpose.

Again, blowing exhibits the quality of glass admirably, and it is delightful to see the numberless beautiful forms that the glass almost naturally assumes in the hands of a workman of intelligence and taste; but, because blown glass is beautiful, is cast and cut glass to be condemned?—cannot beautiful forms and other qualities be exhibited by those methods as well? And if they answer their purpose, is not that enough? Are we to waste our time in condemning cows because they are not horses?

The assertion that terra-cotta ought to be used in small pieces like bricks, because it is a sort of brick, and not in large pieces that might be mistaken for stones, is an idle assertion, and a mischievous one, for it would limit its profitble use. If it fulfils the purpose for which it is wanted, what does it signify whether it is like stone or like brick? What can it matter, whether a soft material becomes hard by artificial or natural processes? We want a certain form—in one case it is moulded, in the other cut; for use or appearance the result is the same. Why should we be troubled with plausible theories, which puzzle the weak, and attempt to limit at once our art and our use? If a material is unfit for the use to which

it is applied it will not be used ; but if it is fit, it is ridiculous to prove from "true principles" that it ought not to be used. Take, for instance, a cornice. The line of argument is this: —A cornice is a stone structure, and a deep cornice can only be made of large stones. Terra-cotta is nothing more than brick, and therefore ought to be small, and consequently is not adapted for large cornices. I reply that terra-cotta *can be* and *is* made in large pieces, and that cornices *are* made of it, and that in every respect it fulfils its practical and artistic purpose.

Another very fashionable dogma is, that no design for one material should be executed in another. Now that is a good, sweeping, plausible dogma.

We will begin with the Greek temples. They were, at first, obvious imitations of wooden structures, and the peculiarity of Gothic is that it discarded square, massive forms for those which imply flexure and ramification—qualities completely at variance with those of stone. Yet "true principle" men are almost invariably Goths. Such is the consistency of philosophers! Basket-work has in all ages been imitated in stone ; forms of pottery were imitated in bronze; and styles and panels, which are essentially wooden, are as commonly rendered in stone, while in wood-work we find that the compliment is returned, and not only cornices of an obviously stone construction, but the arch itself, which is essentially so, is over and over again executed in wood ; and in ornamental art a fanciful imitation of structures and other objects originally executed in another material is one of its commonest phases. Are we, at the mere dictation of critics, to condemn all these things?

On the other hand, is there nothing in material? As long as the work is possible and useful, are we to take no notice of the material in making a design? Is the evasion or the patient surmounting of the difficulties of a material a merit or a defect in the work? If works of art are praised for being in accordance with the material, are not works elaborated in spite of the material equally worthy of praise? Have we no definite rule to guide us in such matters as these? There is certainly none, and I hope there never will be in the sense in which popular dogmas are now put forth.

But though to such questions as these it is impossible, and rightly impossible, to give categorical answers, my own sympathies, in common with those of most artists of any education or knowledge of ornament, are so decidely in favour of the expression of the qualities of the material, rather than of the skill of the artist, which would tend to obliterate them, that I will briefly state what may fairly be urged on this side of the question. In the first place, when we are judging of the comparative merits of two opposing principles, we may very well speculate on the result of the complete predominance of one or the other. Now, I think it necessarily follows that monotonous uniformity in the ornamentation of every material, and a general tendency to naturalism and finish, would result from the complete triumph of skill; whereas a variety, which could not fail to be both interesting and pleasing, would be the result of the opposite principle—a principle which has a natural leaning towards the Ideal Pole in our scale; and all ornamental art, if a little inclined to be rough and barbaric, would be more symmetrical, conventional, and severe. The consideration of an instance, if it does not enable us to come to an exact and definite conclusion, will at least put the conditions of the problem into something like intelligible order. Let us, for example, take *woodcuts*. Now, my own feeling about woodcuts is that those are the best which have the essential character of wood, and are most distinguishable from engravings in other materials. I prefer vigorous, even coarse work, to a refinement which rivals the detail and minute finish of an engraving on steel. But if I am shown a modern woodcut of some rustic scene—perhaps after Birket Foster—I at once admit its success, a sort of success which is altogether impossible in the older method. And at first it may seem a little ungracious to say I like the old work better; but the fact is, there is necessarily something acquired and technical in our tastes. If we regard it as a woodcut, all our preconceived notions of what a woodcut should be affect our judgment; but if we regard it as a representation of a fact or scene, we frankly take it for what it is worth, whether it is done on wood, steel, or copper. If the object of the artist is purely imitative, we

do not take notice of the material in which he works; but if his object is to produce a good woodcut, a good majolica plate, or a piece of goldsmith's work, then we cannot divest ourselves of the associations which the knowledge of such arts naturally has on our tastes.

The rudest work is necessarily the most materialistic (if I may use the word in that sense). The rougher the tools and the less his skill, the less is the workman able to subdue the material to his will; so that all barbaric ornament is necessarily more in harmony with the material than that of an age more mechanically dexterous. For this reason, also, all arts are simpler at their beginning, and, so far, often better, than they are at a later period, when a stern severity gives way to elegance and finish, the result of better tools and workmanship, and perhaps not a little desire to show them off. But, on the other hand, those whose sympathies lean towards material will always be in bad company, for the ignorant and unskilful will always be its loudest advocates.

The harmony between design and material is more generally evident and satisfactory in ancient than in modern work, because the design was made and executed by the same man. Modern designs are often vulgar or absurd, because they are made by vulgar people who know nothing of work. When artists are workmen, and workmen artists, if philosophers will only let them alone, we shall again have work almost unexceptionable in taste and style.

To some extent I sympathize with those who preach so much about material. But they set about an argument pretty much as a rude Norman would have carved out a capital with an axe; and I object to their dogmas because they are too superficial, and they are too one-sided to influence any but the thoughtless and prejudiced; while, as an indictment against those who work on an opposite principle, they will not hold water for a moment. It is impossible to lay down any rigid law about material. State any law you choose; I will undertake to find some object in the Museum executed in exact opposition to your law which you will at once admit is a praise-compelling success. A broad and liberal mind can

alone appreciate art; narrow dogmas are the watchwords of cliques and the cause of most of the art absurdities of the day.

There is another phase of this subject which is a very favourite one with critics, and that is the *deceptions* of art. The high moral tone assumed against all imitations is so plausible that many are deceived by it. They say everything should appear to be exactly what it is. I think it generally does that without the aid of critics. All stucco and cement is condemned because it is like stone, or, as the critics say, pretends to be stone. I have even heard paint condemned because it hides the material underneath, and I believe a certain school would condemn a man's skin, and would infinitely prefer to see the bloody muscles bare.

Let us, for argument's sake, take the instance of veneering, or, what is even worse, gilding. If there is wickedness anywhere, surely it is here. Can any subterfuge be more base than this? By a trumpery, almost impalpable coating, to make mere plaster pass for pure gold! It is no doubt always as well to attribute the worst possible motives to everybody; but I venture, nevertheless, to ask, is any deception intended? Is it not just possible that these pretentious impostors may admire the brilliant quality of the surface, and think it no sin to enjoy it at a less price than solid gold? They might even be willing to inform their friends that their picture-frames were not entirely of solid gold. Would it be possible for them in this way to avoid the condemnation of the critics, or is it really more moral to eat butter in lumps than to spread it thin?

All these questions about the deceptions of art may afford subjects for the speculations of casuists, but have nothing whatever to do with art, which, as I have said over and over again, has to deal with appearances alone.

If you wish to succeed as an artist, waste no time in theories. The interests of the artist and the critic are diametrically opposed; to the artist it is an advantage to limit the consideration of art to art alone, while the more the critic can deviate into other fields, the more he has to write about. Hence all this exaggerated morality. Study not the words

of critics, but the works of the old masters—these alone will enable you to form a sound, broad, and liberal judgment. There is good in all styles: use principles for your own guidance, not to condemn others. Talk little, do much, and you will acquire, by work and observation, a taste and power which will enable you to form a style of your own, free from an exaggerated regard for material on one hand, or from a reckless *bravura* of execution on the other. Always mistrust those who *prove* any particular art is wrong; and when an *artist* has a theory, you may be pretty sure it is only a cloak for his own deficiencies. Artists are particularly ingenious in this sort of self-deception; but nothing is a greater impediment in the race for true excellence than this. Leave them to their own ideas, and beat them.

ADDRESS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SESSION.

AS we have just concluded our Session,[1] it will not be out of place to sum up the progress that has been made, to note such defects as may have been detected, and to caution you against some misapprehensions which, not unnaturally, may have arisen. And, first, I have again to point out the want of intellectual effort. It is not that you are unwilling to work, but that your energy wanes; you lapse into indifference and idle imitation. If you really understood the enormous value, during the whole of your future career, of accurate, definite, exact knowledge, and how valuable an influence on character as well as intellect the discipline of learning would have, you would grudge neither the time nor the effort necessary to acquire it. That knowledge is power is especially true in art.

Be not disheartened when you compare your rough drawings with the more finished productions of an imitative system. Drawings must be looked upon as aids to knowledge alone: the value of the drawings themselves is nothing. In a given time you might make two imitative finished drawings, or fifty rougher sketches, from life or memory. The first might,

[1] The session included lectures on the Human Figure, Architecture, and Ornament.

perhaps, be worth three shillings, the latter two shillings and sixpence: but even if the sketches have failed to impress as many facts on your memory as I could wish, they afford a larger experience and more suggestions for the action of the figure than could possibly be the case if your time had been spent on laborious and mechanical strippling. We must, however, guard against a not improbable failing—a habit of leaving works incomplete. In our attempt to acquire knowledge, we must not neglect that power of imitative finish, and that facility of execution, which are actually necessary to success in art. I would most strongly recommend you always to have some drawing from the antique, or a painting of "still life," which you can take up at odd times. This is a matter of the highest importance, not only to your progress in execution, but as an economy of time. The drawing is, in this respect, of more use than the painting, for you can take it up for ten minutes; while it is hardly worth while to set your palette for a shorter time than an hour.

We do not sufficiently study from nature: we ought to draw and study vegetable forms, shells, fishes, birds, beasts. A continual use of your note-book should enable you to lay up an inexhaustible store of artistic materials and suggestions. We ought to know perfectly the general construction of at lest all these common varieties of animals; we ought to know the anatomy and general arrangement of the feathers of birds, and the leading forms of fishes;—in this respect not only the teaching, but the materials of the schools, is deficient. The leading types of shells, insects, and the wonders of the miscroscope, furnish inexhaustible but too much neglected suggestions to the decorative artist.

Then, again, the study of the arrangement of colour of natural objects is almost entirely ignored; yet how pregnant would it be with the most valuable and original suggestions. There is hardly anything in nature that is not perfect in colour. A dead sparrow would enable you to arrange the marquetrie of a cabinet with faultless harmony. Then, again, the varied tints of any colour in light, shade, and half-tint are always harmonious. The gradations of colour in a flower, if

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properly studied, would teach a lady to dress with a taste that would be the envy of her sex. That dress is not, more than it is, the study and recognised province of an artist, is a matter of wonder. Surely a beautiful woman, beautifully dressed, is as much worth seeing as a decorated palace.

The study of drapery will form another important branch of your education. I have already pointed out many of its leading principles and lines; but these are hardly more complex, varied, and interesting than its colour and texture. Drapery adds mass, variety, and splendour to the figure; without its aid two-thirds of art would have been impossible. What would Veronese or Rubens be without silk and satin?

Painting should be studied in an exact and systematic, not mere imitative, method. It would, for instance, be a most interesting and instructive lesson to take a bust, and artificially define its shadows from a given point; let those shadows be painted brown; then shift the imaginary light, and again define the shadow, and paint the interval between the two shadow lines grey. Again shift the lift, and paint the interval red, and so on to the final yellow high lights. Of course, I do not mean that this should be done on the bust, but on an accurate drawing of the bust on which the different shadow lines were clearly defined. A study of this sort would explain the rationale of shadow and colour; it would show that colour was principally dependent on the angle of incidence of the light. It would give you the power of putting down the shadow, half tint, local colour, and high light, broadly and simply. It would enable you fully to appreciate the fact that the art of good colour is keeping the colours distinct; when mixed they are little better than mud.

These are subjects that we have as yet hardly entered upon, but which will afford occupation for years; and I may well feel some dismay when I think how short the time is in which I am expected to teach them. But you must look upon my teaching rather as suggestions for future study than as its accomplishment.

I will now briefly touch on a misapprehension that is not unlikely to have occurred to you. It may perhaps be thought

that in my endeavours to teach the science of art, and, as far as I can, to formulate the phenomena of nature, I am inclined to neglect its infinite variety, and the individuality of its detail; that I exalt technicalities at the expense of subject and expression; in short, that I consider the body rather than the soul of art. But the least consideration would show how erroneous such an estimate must be. I have fully pointed out, by means of the Scale of Art, that all the principles and technicalities, which are essential at the Decorative and Ideal pole, may gradually be relaxed as we approach the opposite one of Imitation and Subject; and that, as we are engaged in the study of ornament, these principles are to us especially necessary; but, besides this, it is the science of art alone that it is possible to teach. It is the language of art, but it is not possible to teach people what to say. It is not unlikely that those who have little may become wordy, but that is no fault of the master who has taught them grammar, but comes from the paucity of their ideas. Neverthless, as from constantly dwelling on principles their value may appear exaggerated, it may not be out of place for me to say, that nothing is so entirely contrary to my views of art as to hold light the more subtle and spiritual qualities of expression and nature; and I will say a few words on the comparative value of *expression*, *form*, *colour*, *detail* and *finish*.

Expression is the very soul of art. First, the expression of action, which is even more important and impressive than the expression of the face. A picture, though it may be splendid in colour and force, if it fails in expression, how tame and insipid it is! How accurately does an attitude express the whole spirit and intention of the man! how clearly is every shade of emotion expressed and detected! We could tell at a glance whether he is abjectly crouching, earnestly imploring, manfully interceding, devoutly praying; differences which we all detect with the most unerring accuracy are, in reality, so minute that it is almost impossible to define or describe them. As an instance of the quickness of our sight, I may mention the almost instantaneous perception of the slight change in the centre of gravity when any one intends to pass on this or

that side; or the readiness with which we detect the least unsteadiness in the walk, and conclude a man is drunk; and how we at once see if a person is at all odd or mentally weak; and yet these deviations from ordinary action could hardly be measured with the callipers.

It is impossible to teach the subtleties of expression; if you have the faculty of putting yourself in the place of any of the actors in a scene—if you vividly realize the character, you will naturally put yourself in the proper attitude. It is not necessary to do so before a glass, though that is useful: the mere fact of feeling and knowing the character will influence your work. Draw small sketches over and over again, till you have succeeded in putting down a few lines that convey to *you* your original idea. This is the most essential thing in art; but, with our present knowledge, it is impossible to teach it. And the same with the expression of the countenance. We can, indeed, prescribe a few coarse receipts for your general guidance; but how subtle, how impossible to define is the quivering lip of St. Catherine—the slightest deviation of line would entirely spoil it. How can we measure, explain, or define the tender earnestness, the imploring look of that lovely face in Millais' "Huguenots," or the divine sorrow of Christ in Raphael's "Agony in the Garden," or the ecstatic and rapt devotion of a saint by Francia, which I saw in a window in the Borghese Palace at Rome?

If you have deep earnest feeling, you *may* be able to imbue others with it, through your work. Without it you can never do so, however skilful you may be in technicalities. Yet technicalities are not to be despised; the instances I have given owe at least some of their effect to the perfection with which the heads are rendered.

Nevertheless, such is the force of strong feeling, that it sometimes makes even the ignorant eloquent; and so in art, particularly in early art, how devout are the saints, how spiritual the angels! How intense is the pathos of the tragic scene of the "Massacre of the Innocents," in such a panel as that on the pulpit by Pisano! Grotesque as are some of the faces, quaint the actions, meagre and faulty the forms (the

limbs looking as if pared with a knife), we are carried away by the direct earnestness with which this dreadful tragedy is told; and we cannot look on this conglomeration of struggling figures without the deepest emotion.

Some of the effect of early art, and of early mosaics in particular, is not, however, to be set down entirely to expression. The solemnity of their position and light, their obvious antiquity, their historic interest, their severity, and the great scope left to the imagination, combine to put us in the proper frame of mind to receive the best impressions; and if we add to all these influences the all-powerful one of solemn music, it is not to be wondered at that too much credit is often given to early Christian art. How surprised and disappointed we often are to see again, after a long interval, works which before stirred our very souls. Their former effect was owing, in a great measure, no doubt, to our own imagination.

It is only fair to ourselves and the artists to endeavour to derive the best impressions from their work. It is wise to see pictures alone, and on no account to see many pictures at one time.

Having touched on the supreme interest of expression in action and in the countenance, I will draw your attention to the kindred subject of *character*.

The seizing and rendering those salient points which combine to give character is an invaluable faculty. It is not so much the intentional exaggeration of some details, and the suppression of the more commonplace ones, as it is that the artist feels and identifies himself, as it were, with the character before him; and so renders it directly. He perceives the whole thing, and that all its incidents and details are in harmony, and combine to express one character, and is thus able to give the true characteristic appearance of figures, portraits, landscape, the sea, or buildings; and this, in all our work, should be our object. If we paint a portrait, we should endeavour to comprehend the whole character of the man; if a landscape, we should give its general impression; if a day, its gloom or brightness, or the hurried impetuosity of a storm, or the glow of evening, or the solemn stillness of twilight. It

is true that every detail helps to render this general impression; but the mere study of detail will never enable us to realize the scene.

Turner, of all artists, is in this respect, as in many others, the greatest. The effect of his pictures is certainly not owing to the careful rendering of detail, for it is suggested rather than given; and yet he has so completely comprehended the character of many of his scenes, that they leave on us all the impression of Nature itself. It is impossible to pass an hour in the Turner room here without feeling that he is the greatest of Nature's interpreters; but I would remind you that *he* did not despise the science of art. He studied works, now called by our philosophers artificial and obsolete, with the greatest assiduity, and thus he acquired that artistic power which enabled him to strike into new and original paths. What a lesson is this to us!

Another aspect of art, which is too little considered by modern critics, is the character and individuality of the artist himself, which induces him to seize on those aspects of nature which are in harmony with his own temperament; and so an impetuous man will best paint stormy scenes, the quiet recluse the sweet influence of the evening, the happy jovial man will revel in the broad daylight of the summer, the devout will paint saints and martyrs. Vandyke had all the feelings and sympathies of a courtier and a gentleman, and so was able to give that high-bred air of dignity and grace to his cavaliers and ladies. The more robust Rubens gave a fuller and more pompous presence to his sitters. The elegant and stately Venetians combined dignity and splendour. The divine Raphael gave touching pathos and the sweetness of feminine beauty, manly dignity and the deepest devotion. To Michael Angelo alone was given the expression of stern solemn power.

Another quality of art, hardly inferior to expression, is *Form;* and this is, from its nature, essentially a learned faculty. I do not mean the mere rendering of any form you may happen to have before you, but a comprehension of the beauty and dignity of fine form *per se*, which produces in an artist the same elevating and ennobling sensation that fine

music does in those who have a feeling for it. This taste or feeling is necessarily peculiar to the artistic faculty; it is an acquired taste, and is, I am sorry to say, in the present day, very generally dormant. Many modern criticisms of Michael Angelo could only be possible to those as devoid of this sense, as men born deaf are of music.

Fine form is firm without being angular, round without being effeminate or formless, broad without being empty. The detail of it is marked without being obtrusive. Mass leads to mass in harmonious sequence, while their contours from every point of view compose a fine outline. The finest art is that which treats a figure or a limb as one beautifully-shaped mass.

Similar observations apply equally to *Colour*. The highest conception of colour is that which embraces the whole picture. General colour should take precedence of local brilliance; fine colour is warm without being hot or foxy; grey and pearly without being cold; brilliant without being gaudy; firm without being heavy.

The man who can paint the half-tones of a face, though they may be nothing more than black and white and raw amber, is a greater artist than he that can paint brilliant-coloured draperies. But there is reason to fear that this truth is just now likely to be exaggerated. The absence of positive colour is already looked upon in some cliques as a sure sign of excellence; and our art has a tendency to become as dry, husky, and dead, as before it was sloppy, stainy, and gay. If an artist wishes to be considered to have an eye for colour, he must take good care to restrain any natural inclination he may have towards the obsolete vulgarity of Venetian splendour; and critics perceive the most subtle harmonies in pictures which, to ordinary mortals, appear to be painted in whitewash and mud.

Knowledge of Detail is essential, but any exhibition of it is bad in art. The great lesson we have to learn in all things is simplicity. It seems a strange thing that only the most profound can be truly simple; but so it is. We may trace all our artistic troubles and failings, whether in ornament or imitation, to the want of it. The rendering of mere detail, though now so much vaunted, holds but a low place in art.

Last in merit among artistic qualities comes *Finish.*

Finish is of two sorts: the finish which leaves nothing wanting in the representation of nature, and the finish of the surface of the painting itself; the latter a quality of no value whatever, but, nevertheless, one to which the fashion of the day obliges qualities far higher too often to be sacrificed. It is oftener an evil than a good.

Of the more legitimate finish we should strive to be capable. The want of it will often prevent the higher qualities of your work receiving the notice their merit deserves, and you should always endeavour to turn out everything from your hand as perfect, as finished, and as forcible as possible.

The value of *originality* can hardly be exaggerated, but, like riches, it may almost be said to be the root of all evil. There is nothing connected with art so misunderstood as originality. How often do we hear even educated men talk of a new style of architecture as some day to be suddenly invented by a genius. The study of the history of architecture and art will dispel this illusion. The Darwinian theory, whether true or not in nature, is certainly true in art. Variation and improvement is a development by selection of what has gone before; every step in art is a natural, reasonable, almost to be expected emanation.

If we study any branch of natural history, we shall see what infinite variety is the result of minute changes of detail. Plants or animals, however dissimilar from each other, have rudiments or vestiges of construction which show their common origin. The different forms of leaves may be traced to one prototype; while flowers, and even fruit, are modifications of leaves. The fore-leg of a quadruped, the wing of a bird, and the fin of a fish are all obviously the same; and, judged by the popular notion of originality, no one is so obviously open to the charge of want of it as the Creator of the Universe. Critics are always fearless and impartial; I wish they would give Art a holiday, and devote their attention to this subject. They would find a great deal in Nature which, unluckily for Nature, does not coincide with their preconceived notion; they would find little originality in their sense of the word, but I hardly think they would complain of want of variety.

If artists would take a common-sense view of originality, they would not be haunted with vain regrets, but would work steadily at their profession, confident that if they had originality they were taking the best means to develop it. It is, of course, easy enough to be original, in the sense of doing something no one has ever done before. If you took six years to paint a lady-bird on the rim of a new flower-pot, you would probably produce an original work; and in ornament originality is, unluckily, easier. There is no particular harm in trying to do something original; but, if you will take my advice, you will be very suspicious of the result. It is probably not original at all in the sense that no one ever thought of it before, but it has been rejected as bad. It would be a more just cause of elation if you had discovered for yourself some combination as old as the hills.

A man of knowledge and refined taste will be less original than one who does not so completely feel the beauty of the old; for he will say, "If my work is not better than the old, why should I put it forth?" and his fastidiousness and modesty may be so excessive as to paralyze his action; but the fame from the coarse and ugly originality of the present day will be short-lived, and in the long run, works of art will always be ranked in the true order of their merit.

A survey of the whole domain of Nature will reveal regions unoccupied by art, some impossible, some difficult; but some that will reward the enterprising with fame. Depend upon it, these prizes will fall neither to the ignorant, the unskilful, nor the vain. Let it be your ambition to do *good*, rather than *original*, work, and your work will be more original than if you had striven to make it so; for you will have developed the power which is alone capable of grasping those aspects of Nature which you may be the first to discover and comprehend. It is of little use finding new countries, if you are too feeble to take possession; but the fact is, that the eyes of the feeble are as weak as their hands, and in perception, as well as in conception and execution, it is only the great who can be original.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE DIAGRAMS.

WHEN the lecturer descends from the rostrum to draw on the black board, or to trace with a stick the characteristic lines of his ready-made diagrams, he lays aside something of his formality; he no longer thinks it necessary to adhere to the strict line of his argument; there is a freshness and freedom in his remarks often more instructive as well as more pleasing than a set discourse; for the laboured conclusions of ordered thought, if too concisely put, are hardly less difficult to comprehend than to state. Books should be read with the same care that they are written; and I fear we must conclude that lectures are often wasted on an audience which is too idle to listen with attention, or too slow to grasp ideas unless they are repeated again and again, turned this way and that, and exhibited in every possible phase. My own lectures are, I fear, hardly open to the charge of being too ordered, or too concise; but the reader will perhaps pardon me if in these explanations I sometimes deviate from my subject, or repeat and amplify what I have already stated more shortly in the text.

These diagrams do not pretend to be anything more than miniatures of such drawings as are done on a black board to illustrate and explain a lecture; it is hoped that they will sufficiently serve this purpose, but on no account should they be taken as examples; these must be sought for in nature, and in the works of great men, by the student himself.

Almost all the plates refer to Composition of Line, a subject which is either ignored altogether, or assumed to be known, and is therefore never taught systematically. The ill-defined generalities of the

usual lectures on Composition leave the student about as wise as he was before, and what he ought to grasp as a principle seldom becomes in his mind anything more than a very vague sort of intuition, while many an artist finds it prudent to deny the existence of a science, which takes not only time and trouble to acquire, but would inconveniently expose deficiencies in his own work. There are, however, one or two objections which I may do well to anticipate. It may be urged that many interesting and beautiful pictures exhibit no trace of "Composition of Line," while the doctrine was wholly unknown to the great majority of modern and many of the old artists. The latter objection I have already alluded to. It involves a consideration of the comparative value of intuition and instruction—of spontaneous and eclectic art. Few practical artists have, I suspect, ever formulated the principles on which they work; but these principles are none the less true because they have adopted them intuitively;—nay, is not this rather a proof of their truth? though it is far from being a proof of the expediency of teaching principles dogmatically which would be followed naturally without any teaching at all. We have here in art the same sort of dilemma that occurs in religion with regard to faith. Is it not a positive evil to demonstrate the truth of facts which were before accepted on faith? Would not this be a transfer of the process from the emotional and meritorious to the intellectual and inevitable, and therefore in no sense meritorious department of human nature? And so in a religious point of view the man would be the loser by the change. These are questions on which I have never been able to come to any conclusion, and so I will pass on to the first objection. I readily admit the facts. Hundreds of pictures in which the most careful tests will fail to discover the smallest trace of science are nevertheless not only interesting but often beautiful. The interest no doubt in the great majority of cases consists in the choice of a subject which cannot fail to be interesting, though it be told clumsily; but I also admit that a picture may be beautiful without being composed on any known laws. If I had said there was no beauty which did not conform to the few principles I have stated, this would be a valid objection to their necessity, and even to their adoption. Let those who like to work without them do so. They may say, and I do not wish to dispute the point, "If they are true principles, and we are born-artists, we have already adopted them intuitively; if we are not born-artists it does not much matter what we do; we prefer to go on as before, without any of your

'Even Distribution,' 'Composition of Line,' and such like receipts for making pictures; we would rather not make pictures in this artificial manner." My answer to this is, "Don't. No one wants you to do so. Go your own way." I claim no more than this: that these principles, "Composition of Line" among them, are discernible, not only in pure ornament, but in most of the finest pictures in the world, and also in the works of Nature herself. I believe (if teaching is good at all) that to point out these principles is a very useful, if not a necessary, part of the education of artists. That works may have merits quite independent of any compliance with these laws I am the last to deny, but these merits in no way depend on the *absence* of the qualities I advocate—qualities which I maintain are necessary only in those works which approach the ideal and ornamental note in the scale of art (see diagram, page 29). But I would remind those who object to principles on the ground that it is not only possible to do without them, but that many fine pictures have been painted almost in defiance of the very rules I advocate, that the same may be said of perspective, anatomy, colour, or any other science connected with art. A man may be wholly ignorant of perspective and yet be able to tell a story very pathetically; but the truth of perspective as a science must be admitted by all, while few would deny its necessity, fewer still its use in art. Errors in perspective may not appreciably detract from the pathos of a picture, but no one would maintain that they enhanced it. The necessity of perspective varies according to the subject; in architectural subjects it is paramount; in a group of figures it will be an indispensable aid in giving each its proper place on the ground plan; in landscapes an artist can get on very well without it: and so "Composition of Line," although of more universal use than perspective, might be dispensed with altogether in those pictures which were merely imitative, or owed their interest to qualities which were not essentially pictorial. To those who object to principles on the ground that they are artificial receipts for making pictures, I would ask why art is in this respect to be considered different to every other science, trade, or business in the world? Because there is some part of art which cannot be taught, are we to despise teaching in that which can? We all know that the mere acquirement of the rules of prosody will never make a poet; but was a true poet ever known to despise such things, or to scorn instruction as artificial? Does an architect venture to break laws which he might plead were entirely conventional? Does

a cabinet-maker despise the rules of his craft? But the modern professors of the most difficult art in the world are not only content to blunder along in the dark, but obstinately adhere to the notion that there is a positive merit in technical ignorance. Some cooks object to weigh out their ingredients. It is, they think, a much grander, as well as an easier thing to work by "rule of thumb;" but I generally notice that they make very indifferent puddings.

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PLATE I.

ANTHEMIONS are the simplest expression of the law of radiation. The enclosing line gives compactness, and prevents any appearance of raggedness—a very important matter in art. The sensitive manner in which the lobes of the anthemium have a tendency to combine with this line affords an interesting example of the natural composition of curves. Note also the rhythmical harmony between the volutes which form the ends of the containing outline, and the lobes which conform themselves as far as they can to the law of the volute, as well as to that of radiation. Fig. 3 shows more plainly the tendency of curves to meet and melt into each other, where they are back-to-back as at *a*, or bend in the same direction, as at *b*.

a a a are tangential, and, if prolonged, will cut the larger circuit of the volute at right angles; this is a very general rule in ornament: if a discord is necessary, do it in the boldest, shortest and most complete manner. So done, it can hardly be said to be a discord. Snch lines have also an artistic value of their own in binding together a composition and making it compact and firm, for lines may convey the impression of being too easily undone and therefore weak, in the same way that wire or iron work which was made up of a too frequent repetition of volutes would be actually as well as æsthetically weak for want of cross braces and ties. Ornament should be more than a mere assemblage of objects, even when they compose well in line; it should be firmly and compactly constructed; it should have an æsthetic strength; we should never feel that it would all tumble to pieces if the enclosing mouldings were removed. The common flowing scroll-work made up of volutes of foliage turning alternately this way and that will do very well where it apparently rests on a horizontal moulding or ledge, but in a perpendicular panel occasional ties would be absolutely necessary.

In a composition of volutes and curves it is not only necessary to have the minor curves tangential to the leading lines of the volutes,

but the points of the foliage of which such compositions are usually made should also lie in a line which is tangential to a dominant line. A careful study of some good example and a little practice will soon initiate the student in the mysteries of tangential composition.

I need hardly say that curves are intimately connected with proportion.

The effect of perspective is worthy of more attention than it generally receives; it produces apparent radiation and rhythm in strata which are in reality almost parallel. The composition of line in clouds is almost entirely owing to perspective.

The apparent radiation of the lines in architecture caused by perspective is not without pictorial value, but the radiation of straight lines has neither the subtlety nor beauty of the radiation of curves; the spokes of a wheel, for instance, have little of that beauty which we all instantly detect in the feathers of a wing, while the beauty of form about the pivot of a fan which combines in so remarkable a way the qualities of rays and volutes, is in reality the beauty of curves, for, although it is constructed of straight lines, owing to their being eccentric they lap over each other and form in every aspect a curve of the most varied character. There is much of this sort of subtle beauty in the arrangement of the leaves on a stalk; when viewed directly from above the leaves appear like a rosette radiating from a central axis, but if we view the composition somewhat obliquely we shall perceive a note of a higher harmony.

But on this subject I must refer the student to Vols iv. and v. of "Modern Painters." Mr. Ruskin there treats of the composition of Line in Rocks, Clouds, Leaves, and other natural objects, in a way that makes one more than ever regret that he does not direct his wonderful powers of analysis and description to the Human Figure.

PLATE II.

THE constant recurrence of the same leading lines in antique figures is evidence, I think, in favour of the Composition of Line being known to the ancients. These lines, it is true, occur in nature as well as art, and if the artist could always have found a model completely to accord with his conception (a thing exceedingly improbable) his work would no doubt equally exhibit them; but I hardly think mere imitation would have given the

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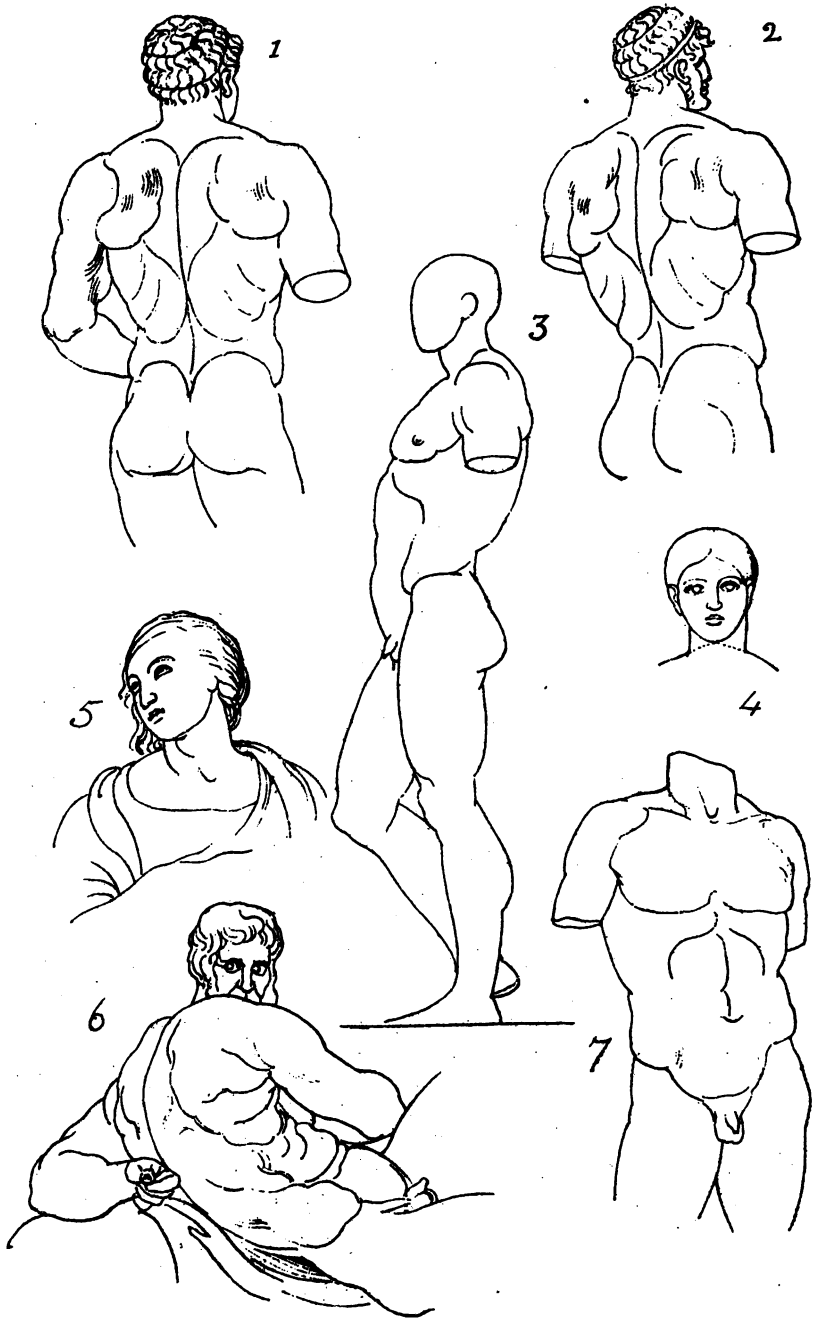

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power then, any more than it does now, to produce either the quality or quantity of work which, after the vicissitudes of two thousand years, is even yet extant.

In more important statues, a constant recourse to nature, and a comparison of numerous models, was no doubt the rule; but in the multitude of small bronzes which must almost have come under the category of "articles of commerce," the setting out of the leading lines, as well as the proportions of the figure, was, I suspect, a matter of formulas—formulas derived from the experience of ages, and probably known only to the craft.

The most important Composition of Line in the human body is the continuation of the line of the back along the crest of the ilium; and this is seen not only in profile but in the full view as well (Figs. 1, 2, 3). It is very remarkable how many of these instances of composition are to be detected not in one or two views only, but continue to be traceable as we turn the figure gradually round. The student would do well to get some statuette which is not too large to be held in the hand and turned about in every direction: he will learn more in this way than he ever will from living models, who as a rule are far from graceful either in form or action; they take no exercise, and are flaccid, mean and awkward.[1] When viewed in profile, the outline of the front of the body, from the pit of the neck down to the great toe, lies in one continuous graceful sweep. Fig. 3. It is hardly necessary for me to say that this and all other lines of composition are made of many overlapping contours, some more prominent than others, but all lying in one general direction. A figure drawn in graceful sweeps, and *nothing more*, would be a boneless, nerveless, worthless thing. Figs. 4 and 5 explain themselves. At the right armpit of Fig. 6 may be seen an instance of radiation of lines, but this is not often visible except in violent action; then it is obvious. I do not know what the critics who condemn Michael Angelo would say if they saw a few strong men struggling together; they would be deeply shocked at their extravagant action, and their too "Academic" display

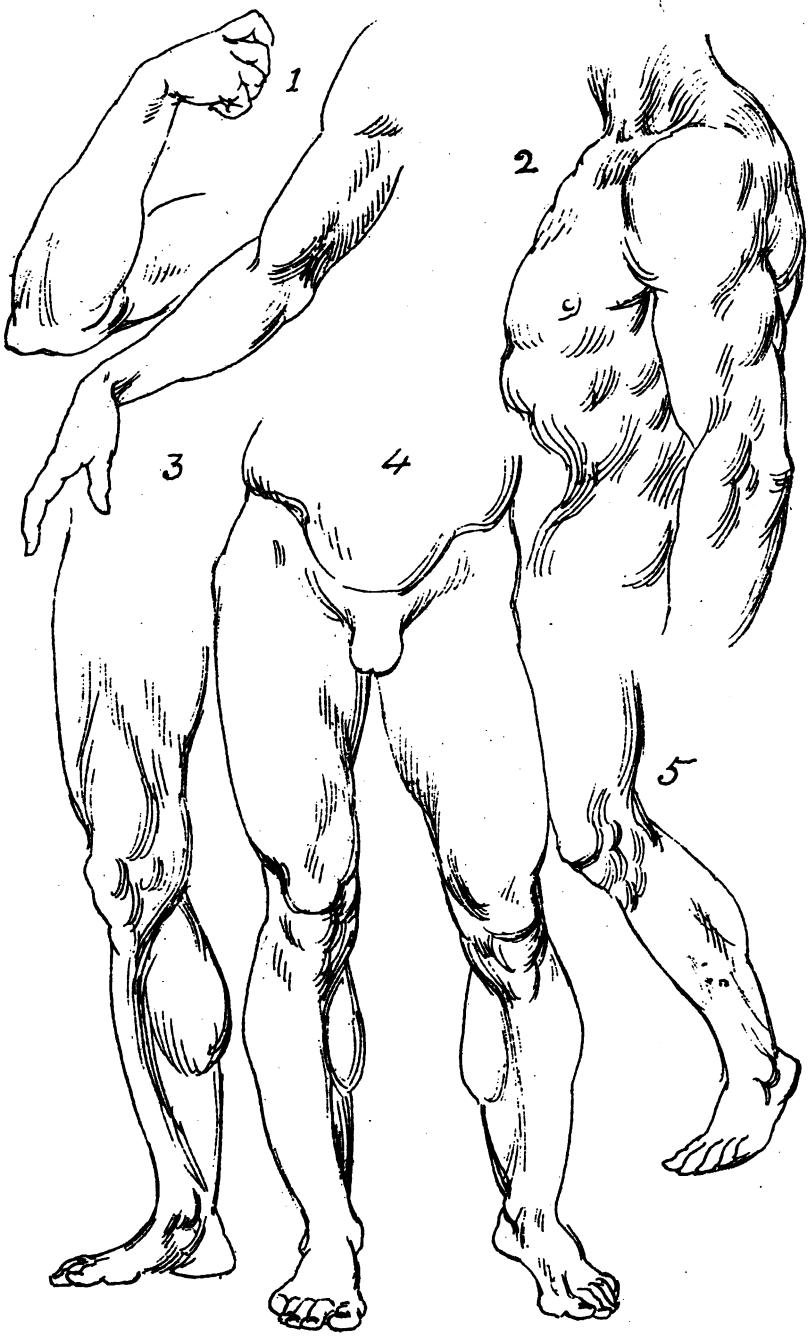
* The game of football is most interesting to an artist; he may there see young men in the most vigorous action; and though they are dressed in thick jerseys and drawers, we can see enough to give us a contempt for the models we draw from in studios. Composition of Line in repose, as well as in vigorous action, is more conspicuous than I could have believed without seeing it. This athletic game gives us a very lively idea of the ancient contests; and with thinner dress, or, better still, no dress at all, would be everything an artist could desire for the study of the human figure in action.

of anatomy. It is to be feared that the only remedy for this vulgar vigour is the painful operation of emasculation.

The lower part of the back and side—or, in other words, the region between the blade-bone and the spine of the ilium—is replete with instances of the composition of curves which seem to wrap round and enclose the waist. A comparison of many living models with Michael Angelo's Torso induces me to think that Art has here in one respect attempted to improve upon Nature by the introduction in a somewhat vacant space of a muscle lying in the direction of the ribs; for this muscle, which is too large to be merely the indication of a rib, there is, as far as I know, no excuse in anatomy; but regarded as composing and uniting the lines of the back and side, it is so satisfactory, that though I have never yet done so, I confidently anticipate finding it in some fine example in Nature—not of course as a distinct muscle, but as a transverse lobe in the latissimus dorsi.

PLATE III.

ART, viewed in its historical progress, exhibits many of the phases through which each individual artist successively passes; freedom of line is one of his latest acquirements; and so we find that the flow of line in the figure, more especially in some views of the arm, was not fully realized till we come to the time of Parmegiano, or even later. The line of Rubens or Vandyke is pre-eminently a painter's line. In saying this I do not mean to imply that there is no warrant for it in Nature—far from it; I know models who invariably recall their peculiarities. A painter's line may very properly be more free than a sculptor's, but it does not necessarily follow that it is artistically incorrect. Compare the picture of the Dead Christ by Raphael, now in the Borghese Palace at Rome, with the same subject by Rubens, in the Museum at Antwerp. There is in the latter a freedom of line which shows *in this respect* (for I am not speaking of the other qualities) a decided progress in art; beautiful as is Raphael's form, it is, nevertheless, compared with later works stiff and dry; some even of Michael Angelo's figures appear tight, and wanting in that flexibility which freedom of handling and line can alone give. In short, some degree of looseness is certainly good in art; it is the contrary of rigid and correct formality. Much of the beauty of ornamental art depends



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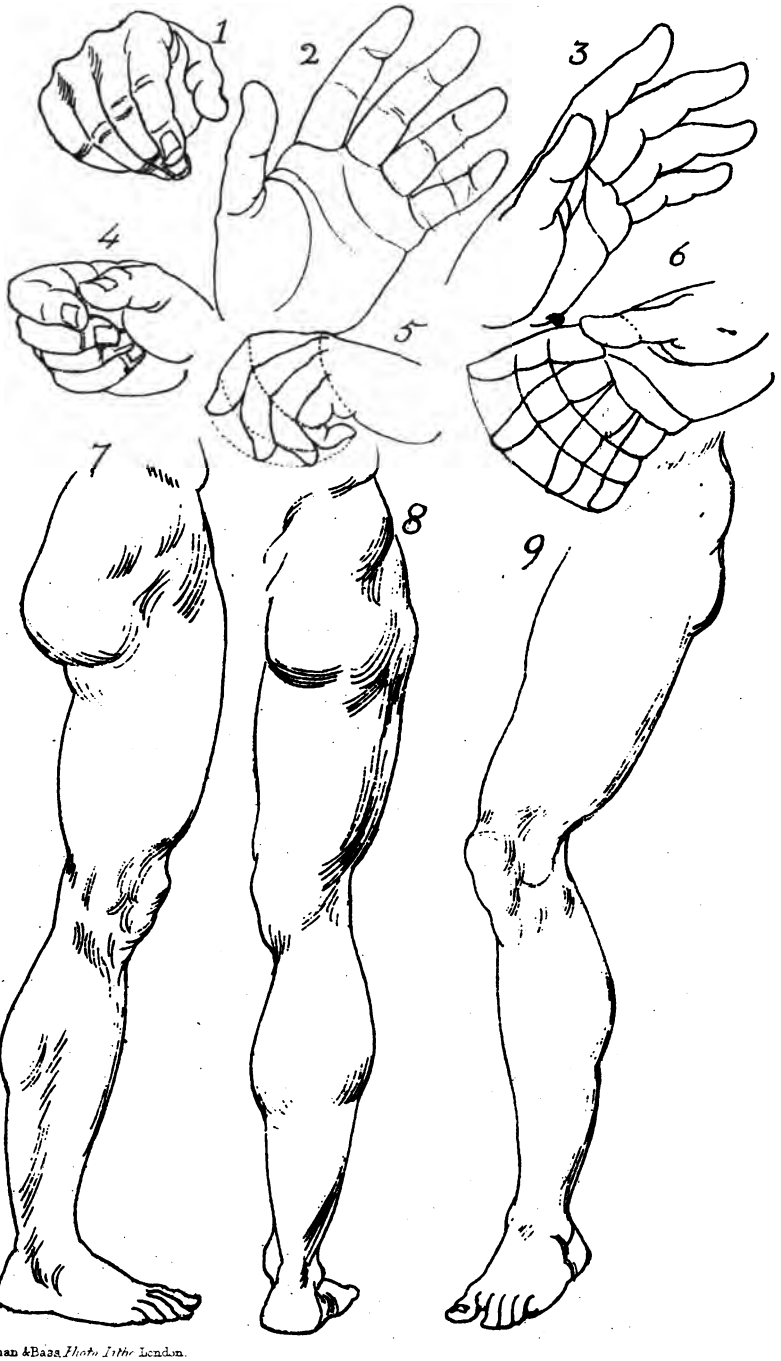
upon this. Compare, for instance, the drawing of an old majolica plate with the miserable and laboured precision of modern "pot painting." It is not only that the work is obviously more playful, spontaneous, and fresh from the hand of the artist, but the actual line is more free and beautiful; and even in so apparently inflexible a subject as architecture, a certain degree of freedom is almost necessary when it is introduced as ornament. Take any composition of Holbein's, and in the place of his fanciful columns, long-eared foliated capitals, and, I dare say, impossible entablatures, let some wiseacre put in the most correct "order" he can draw; you would at once perceive that he had "improved" away its most piquant flavour. Critics little think how much beauty the world loses by their constant condemnation of the least deviation from a stiff and correct precision. A level which is literally dead is not very interesting. It is, no doubt, a very great pleasure to swish off the head of any unfortunate poppy that may appear above the well-rolled lawn, but it is just possible that the poppies may get tired of growing; and then what would become of the critics? The freedom of which I have just been speaking, though connected with Composition of Line, is a refinement—a subordinate branch of a study of which it is my object here to teach only the leading facts and their simplest expression. And so we will return to our diagrams. Fig. 1 shows the flow of line in the arm; the straight and tendinous part of the forearm is contracted by the swell of the muscles higher up; the fingers radiate while the knuckles lie in a curve. In Fig. 2 the edge of the muscular projection of the triceps lies in the same direction as the outline of the supinator muscles. There is also a general harmony between the contours of the upper part of the arm and the blade-bone, a harmony often exhibited by the edge of the shadow, which seems to suggest and inspire a corresponding execution with the brush. The flow of line in Fig. 3 is obvious enough. In the front view of the leg the outline of the adductor muscles crops out again on the outside of the leg; the outline of the vastus externus goes suddenly in just above the patella, and is taken up by the outline of the calf; while the mass formed by the vastus internus, the padded internal condyle of the femur, and the tendons of the inside of the thigh, form together a full and varied sweep which, beginning in the depression of the sartorius, flows into the inner line of the shin-bone below. With this also compose the inner lines of the calf and the soleus.

PLATE IV.

THE hand is Nature's masterpiece, and would require a treatise to itself. The extreme simplicity of the means by which its beauties are produced is one of its most astonishing characteristics. A slight curve of the back of the hand gives the fingers that tendency to lap over each other which is the source of such subtle and beautiful combinations of curves. Take, for instance, the inner view of a partially closed hand, Fig. 4. How completely its beauty would be lost if the bending of the fingers were exactly parallel—we should lose all its complex grace. And observe, it is not only the outlines of the fingers that compose in radiating curves, but also the corresponding nails and joints all lie in curves. This is a most important law in ornament. The beginner is too apt to confine his attention to the leading and generally radiating lines of construction, leaving what he fancies are subordinate parts to take care of themselves; but it is necessary that these also should lie in harmonious curves.

There is the simple radiation of the fingers when the eye is in a line with knuckles, Fig. 5—the more beautiful views when the hand is more foreshortened, Figs. 1 and 2—and when it is opened the same radiation and proportional curves may be detected. The lines or creases in the palm of the hand also compose with each other, with the index finger, or the lines of the knuckles. I need hardly point out to the student that the crease that defines the ball of the thumb is formed by the flexure of the thumb towards the palm. The generally united flexure of the three fingers is the cause of a common crease; while to the index finger a more independent action is allowed by its occupying the intermediate space.

But the lines of the hand must not only be considered by themselves, but as leading in a natural, expressive, and graceful way to external objects, or doubling up, and, as it were, returning the line in loops to the body. The gradual tapering of the arm from the shoulder to the tips of the fingers, not rigidly like a wedge, but with a beautiful undulation, the spreading of the fingers, and even their different lengths, all help to prevent any sudden break in its composition with other objects.



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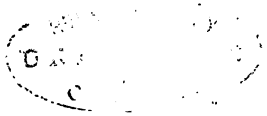

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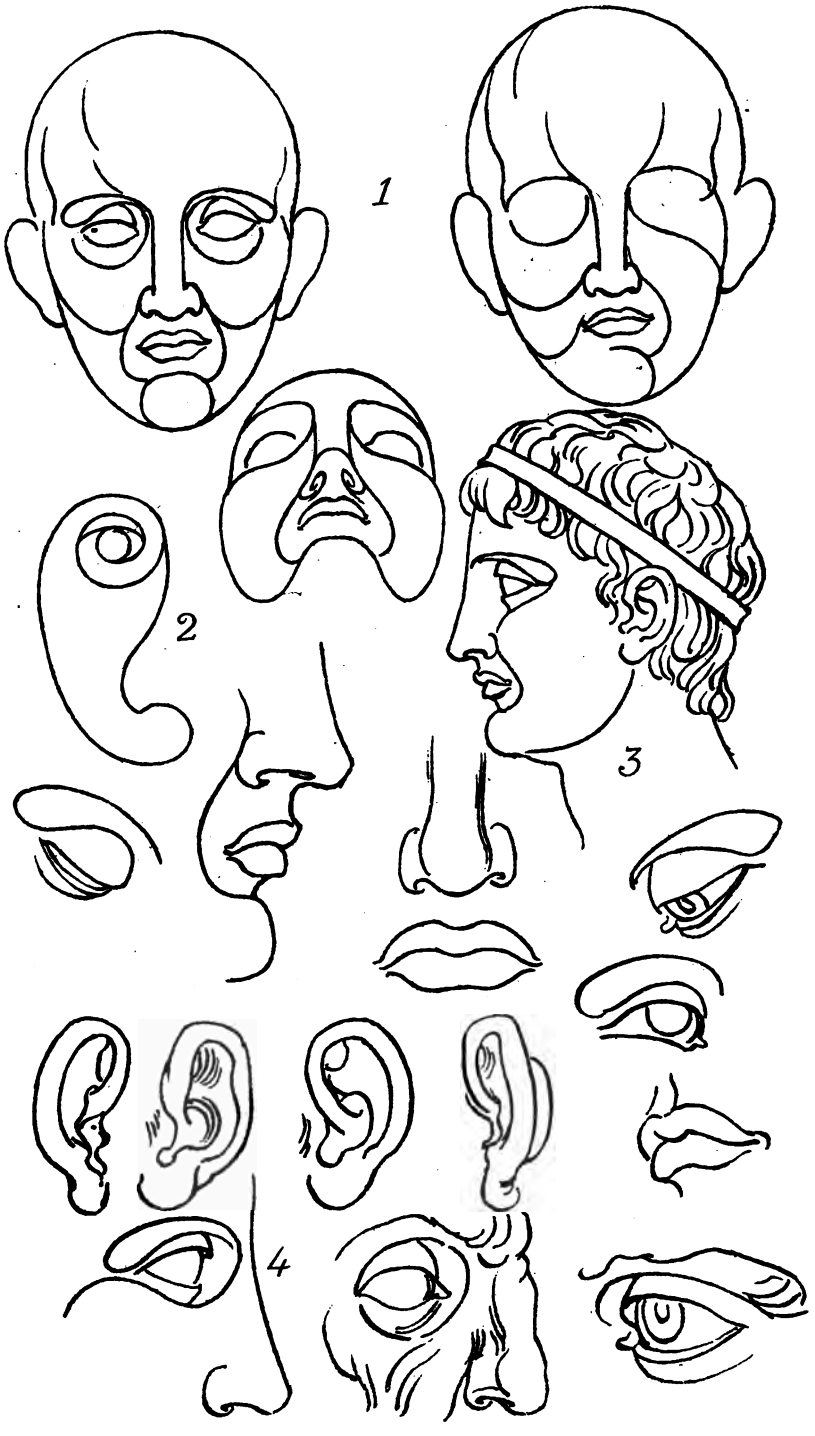

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Watch with what ease and grace the hand adapts itself to any forms however irregular. Study the handling of tools, the grasp of a rope, and you cannot fail to be astonished at the simplicity of the means by which such an infinite variety of graceful compositions are effected.

I have already pointed out the leading lines of the leg. The outlines seem to cross the leg at the knee. In studying two models of legs by Michael Angelo, I was much interested to find that this was the case from the great majority of points of view. The composition of the leg with the ground will be noticed further on. The facts I have just pointed out can hardly be fully accounted for on purely utilitarian principles. The æsthetic motive of the human figure will probably be accepted by every thoughtful person. That every part may be of use, and nothing redundant, is no proof that the general aspect and form were neglected in the creation of man.

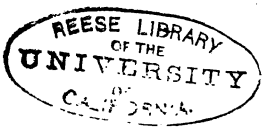
Utilitarian principles are just now very much in vogue. But, for all that, the civil engineer will never be an architect or the mechanic an artist. The only result we have hitherto achieved by such principles is a cheap, mean, and spiky angularity. The "true principle" man has the same relation to art that the narrow-minded fanatic has to religion.

PLATE V.

THE lines of the human face comprise almost every beauty of which curves are capable. I have roughly mapped out the principal ones; but it is necessary to observe that in the higher organic forms there are few markings which can be properly represented by lines. Even the edge of the brow, or of the nose, except where there is a positive outline, cannot be expressed by a line, much less the form of the cheek. Lines are arbitrary markings used to define a ditch or a ridge, and are sometimes put where an outline would be if the object were viewed from another point. Take up a cast of the mouth or the eye, and note how each lobe, or region, although it has a definite form of its own, melts in harmonious contours into others equally beautiful, and you will see how impossible it is to render them by lines. Even shadow is rather the exhibition of another phenomenon than a rendering of the form itself, which can only be comprehended by looking at it very closely

or by feeling it. But taking lines for what they are worth, you will find almost all the ordinary curves used in ornament in those of the face. The flow of line in any feature from any point of view is almost always harmonious. The curves on a youthful face are full and large; as years pass by they become smaller and more angular, while the larger masses are subdivided into minor districts. The leading lines of the centre of the face exhibit a combination of curves not uncommon in the ornament of a panel, while these lines are met by others, which, radiating from the side of the head, unite with them and form festoons not unlike those in drapery. The line defining the upper prominence of the forehead and the frontal sinus composes with the line of the nose, the edge of the frontal bone with the edge of the lower orbit—the outline of the cheek bone with the naso-labial fold—the outline of the jaw with the opposite outline of the chin, and of course with that of the opposite jaw, forming the contour of the face. Even the volute is not unrepresented—(see the lines about the orbit in Fig. 2)—it is also suggested in those of the nose, not only in man, but also in those of a great many animals. The mouth in profile, as well as full face, exhibits a play and harmony of line truly wonderful, taken up and continued by the chin and jaw, while every view of the ear shows a beautiful combination of curves.

The *character* of line in the face, particularly the outline of the cheek, is full and flowing, without being empty or weak; it has that flatness or suggestion of being double, which we detect in all fine forms—a quality which is more often found in cinque-cento than in modern art. Compare the outline of an old majolica vase with that of its modern counterfeit; the one has a flattened fulness, a firm but double form, with just sufficient freedom and irregularity to suggest that it is the spontaneous creation of an artist; the other has the mechanical precision of the lathe—its curve is a simple one, it is weak, correct, insipid, and has none of the flavour of the artist's mind. The doubleness (if we may coin such a word) of so many of the outlines of the human figure arises very often from overlapping lobes of muscles, or perhaps from simple muscles having a tendency to come into action near their origin and insertion rather than in the centre. Nothing is more disagreeable than a figure drawn in simple curves; it appears bulbous, inflated and weak. The cinque-cento artists felt this even more acutely than the classic sculptors. Parallelism is another quality which often surprises the careful observer of the human face—the shadows of the brow, the nose, the mouth, and the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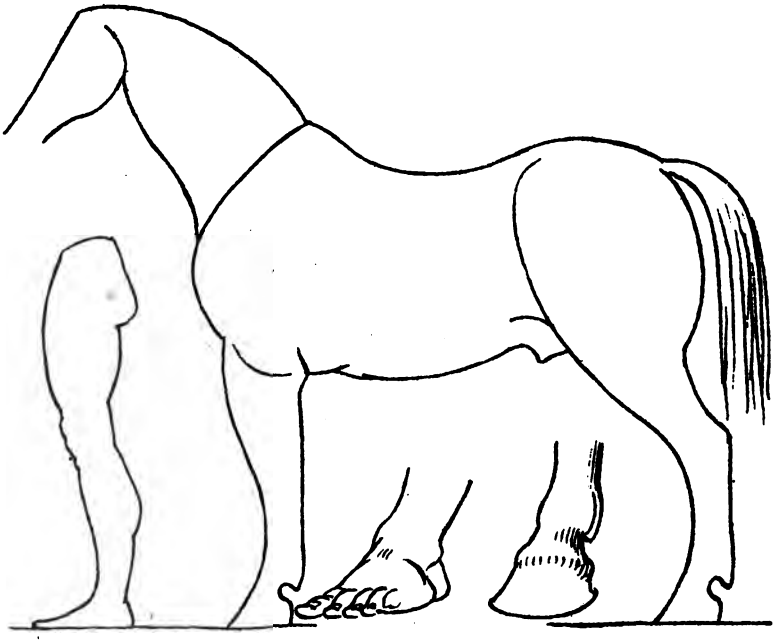


as. *Photo-Litho.* London.

cheek are very often parallel; and in children particularly I have noticed that in the profile the outlines of the nose, the upper lip, the upper part of the cheek from the eye to the wings of the nostrils, are all parallel, while the profile of the lower part of the forehead is parallel with the general line of the front of the eye and of the cheek from the nose to the mouth.

PLATE VI.

THE composition of the front of the leg with the ground is almost as obvious in the horse as it is in man. It is what is usually called a line of beauty; although it is made up of many minor curves, straight lines of sinews, and bony angles, they are so arranged that each helps to preserve the continuity of the curve right down to the ground. I am particular on this point, because in many of the antique statues the instep is so large that it breaks the line. But this is never the case in the works of Michael Angelo; and few antique statues have the firmness and grasp of the ground which we see in those of the Renaissance, to say nothing of the æsthetic superiority of the later system. The student can easily see for himself which is the most true to nature. The same sort of line may be seen in the hind leg of most quadrupeds, its curve and direction being varied according to the habits or the weight of the animal. The legs of a cart-horse are straighter and more directly under the body than those of a racer; in a greyhound the curve is more marked, and the legs extends considerably behind the body; in the lion, the tiger, or the cat, the curve is still more pronounced, being almost like an S, and the hock is nearer the ground. This general line is wonderfully expressive of the action of the hind leg, and, in drawing quadrupeds, the student would do well to put it in at once, and add the detail afterwards, taking care that, as far as possible, it lies within the general line. These observations refer, of course, to the *front* of the legs. The rear outline in both fore and hind legs is remarkably straight, and in the hind leg angular. In the horse the line of the hock and the profile of the face is, in many instances, absolutely straight, and this counteracts the heaviness and weakness of too many curves. Notwithstanding the flow of line in the neck, back, and haunches, the great mass of the body of the horse prevents his frequent appearance in ornament. But, in pictorial art, for this

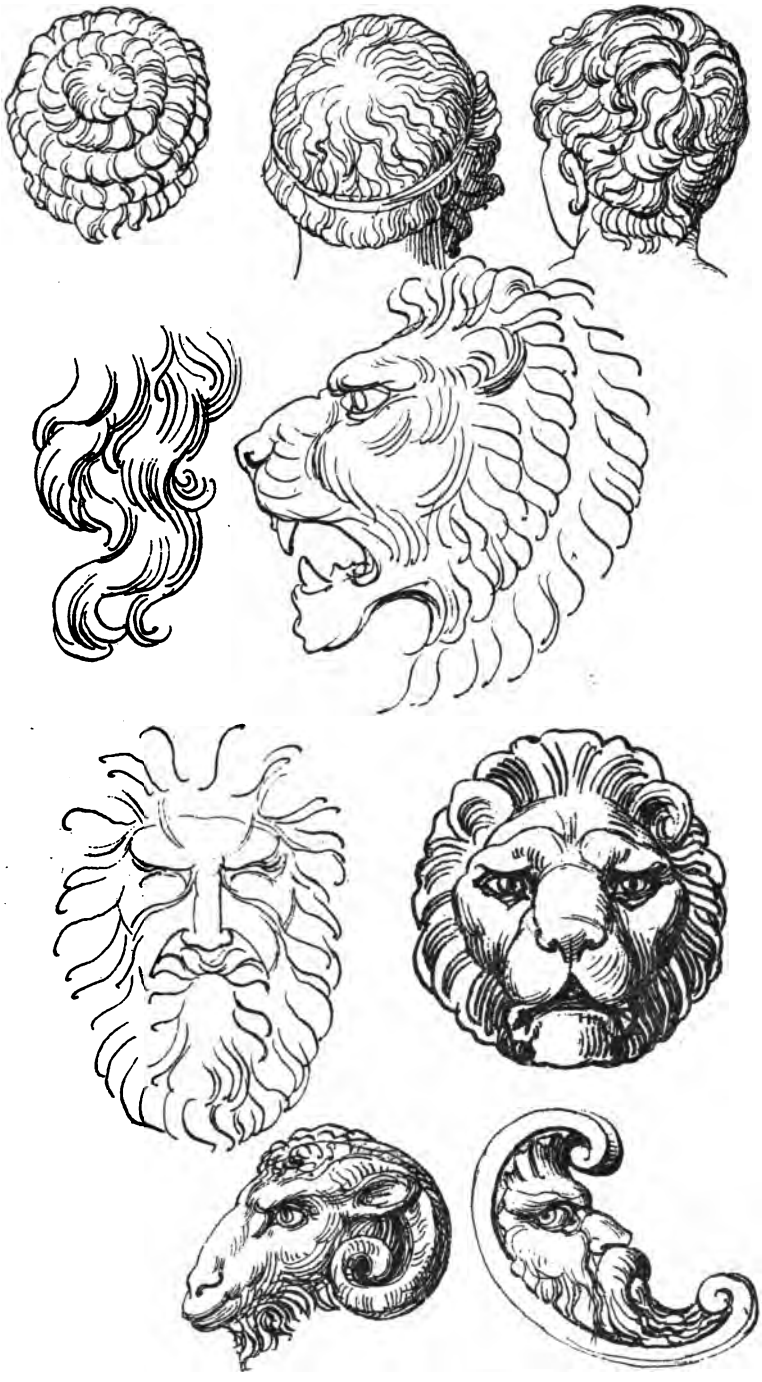
very reason, the horse has always been a favourite with the great masters. The composition of the wing with the shoulder in griffins and other nondescript monsters is sufficiently explained by the drawing. The wing is generally supposed to grow from the spine of the blade-bone.

As ornamental wings are seldom used (I cannot recall one instance of their being folded on the body), it is not necessary to be so particular about their construction as about their artistic composition, though some attention to possibilities is never wasted on improbable subjects. The composition of the line of the foot and the radiation of the toes have their counterparts in those of the lion's paw and claws. In ornamental art, and, indeed, in all art that is not professedly imitative, it is necessary to exaggerate the curve of the phalanges and the actual claw of rapacious and carnivorous animals; it is only so that we can express the nature of the animal. The paw of Landseer's lions is, no doubt, very like nature, but it is after all a very inexpressive mass. The sculptor should go deeper than the fur for his facts. It is difficult to find good models of feet; the antique are soon exhausted; the extremities in small bronzes are generally worthless. Michael Angelo's feet are sometimes short and lumpy. Raphael's are well worth study; their style and drawing are sometimes unexceptionable, as in the Sacrifice at Lystra. I wish I could say the same of his hands. There is a sad want of knowledge there; they not unfrequently appear to be suffering from chilblains. They are sometimes expressive enough in their action, but never firmly articulated.

Note the hands in the two pictures by Raphael in the National Gallery; even his best hands never approach those of his great rival.

PLATE VII.

IN the antique the hair is treated in masses or lumps which bear a general resemblance to each other both in form and size, while each outline composes with and flows into the next. The hair of the men is almost invariably designed on the same principle; the lines radiate from a centre at the back of the poll. Figs. 1, 2, and 3 are very fair examples of the different degrees of adherence to the same law. When once pointed out the student is



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often amused at the simplicity of the composition, but if he attempts to do anything better he will soon find out why such an arrangement was so often repeated. It is easy to laugh at repetition; but if an artist is actuated by the wish to do what is good rather than what is new, he will continue to repeat a treatment till he, or some one else, finds out a way to do it better. Nature does the same thing millions and millions of times without any one, at present, having accused her of want of invention. A severe figure requires severe hair. Put a flowing wig on the little bronze Hercules, and you will soon appreciate the tight, compact, and ordered symmetry of his "knob." The hair of women is more varied both in mass and treatment; instead of short lumps, long wavy tresses mingle with each other in flowing lines which are often admirably composed. In the front view of a bearded face we may detect the same Composition of Line that we see in the lion's mane. The moustache in antique and cinque-cento masks is treated on the same principle.

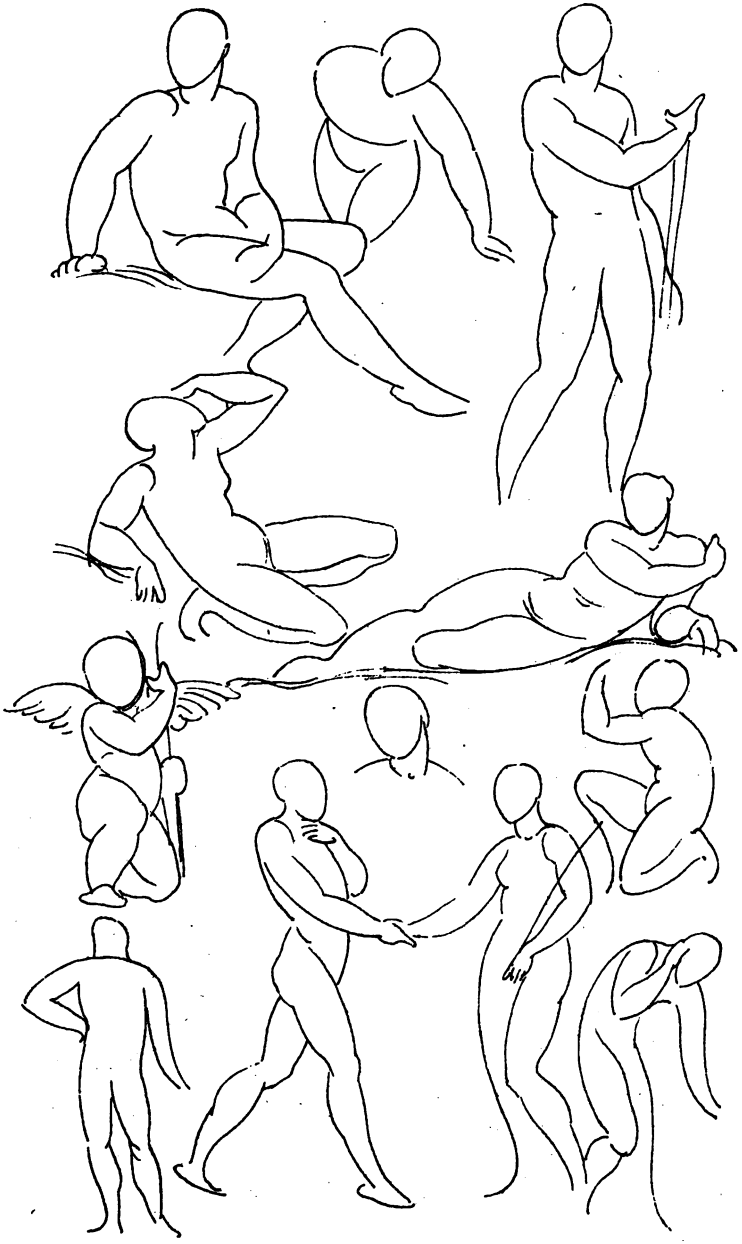
Hair is a subject of immense importance to the artist, and is the source of almost as much variety as is drapery. Putting aside the numberless gradations of colour and thickness, &c., which mark the age and sex, and its quality, which is so expressive of character, and looking at hair from the pictorial point of view alone, how invaluable are its uses! With what force does it enable us to relieve a head from a light background—what piquancy is given by a dark moustache, what dignity by a flowing beard! What picturesque variety can be given to a composition of many heads. Take a dozen barbers' blocks and see how colour, contrast, and even dramatic suggestion, can be expressed by the hair alone.

The head of the lion exhibits a very remarkable combination of lines: in the profile the general line of the forehead and nose is parallel with that of the lower jaw. The line from the nose to the corner of the mouth is curved like an S. This is very clearly marked in the admirable lion-hunts in the Nineveh bas-reliefs. There is hardly anything in nature that I find so difficult to model as a lion's head; it seems Proteus-like—to be now like a man, now a hound, now a monkey. The least change in the length of the nose seems entirely to alter the character; and yet if you compared examples you would find them of every length. Even Landseer, who knew lions well, and in some respects succeeded so well out of doors, has modelled for the jambs of the doors of the new Royal Academy galleries heads which, though intended for lions', look much more like dogs'. There is

hardly anything that shows so radical a difference in treatment as lions' heads. After studying them all we should be puzzled to say what constituted a lion; yet the great majority of ornamental examples, from the Assyrian, Egyptian, and Greek downwards, differing as they do in almost every particular, are somehow or other unmistakeably leonine. The Nelson lions, admirable as they are, are too naturalistic. The larger the work the more necessary is it that it should be generalized and severe; and I think it will be found that it is more especially in the treatment of the hair that they are defective.

PLATE VIII.

THE three great composers are Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Titian. Those unfortunate artists who lived about A.D. 1600, and are almost covered up with abuse because they were mere "conventional composers," and "macchinisti," "decorators," and so on, seem to me, on the contrary, either to have forgotten, or never to have known a science the supposed practice of which, like that of the "Black Art," has rendered their names almost infamous. I am inclined to condemn these men, not because they knew, but because they did not know the mysteries of their craft. Neither their figures nor their draperies are well composed. Their draperies especially are loose, incongruous masses, which exhibit no trace of any knowledge of Composition of Line. Their pictures are sprawling and untidy; in short, it is not the laws, principles, and order of art that have been their ruin, but excess of freedom and power. They lost in picturesque force the measured, even dignity of the earlier art; their subject occupied so large a space that it wanted that compactness which was almost a necessary consequence of an art based on the law of "even distribution." Their shadows, being darker, no longer exhibited a deeper tint of the local colour, but were of a uniform brown. I am far from saying these men were not skilful in their own style. I do not like their art, because they abandoned ornamental for pictorial principles. But those whe look upon imitation as the end and object of art ought logically to regard the artists of the 17th century as superior to their predecessors. I suspect that the real sin of these men is their power —a quality extremely distasteful to those who spend months in



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"conscientious" and stippled copies of a lay figure. However, be that as it may, the student will learn little from the men who are so much abused for technical display, and he will in time discover that the greatest men have the greatest knowledge. Raphael will afford more instruction that all the "macchinisti" put together.

The student will do well to watch the accidental attitudes of the nude models when resting and in action. He will see how often the lines of the limbs flow unexpectedly into each other,—I say *unexpectedly*, for Composition of Line is to many a student a new science. I have illustrated it here by flowing curves, leaving out all detail, so that the principle may be more clearly intelligible; but I cannot too often caution the student against supposing that everything is to be drawn in curves. The maxim, "ars est celare artem," is especially necessary in this. Too frequent curves convert grace itself into insipidity. Compare West's painting of Christ Healing the Sick with the cartoons of Raphael in the next room: you will see that the principal difference is that Raphael's line is the squarer and the firmer of the two. The *tendency* of one line to compose with another in general direction is not only quite sufficient, but seems to express a higher artistic beauty than the absolute continuity of the curve.

Plate 2 gives an instance of the commonest composition of the lines of the leg seen in profile. The arms present a great variety of line, and very frequently compose with each other; as, for instance, when one hand is placed on the head, the other on the hip; many Caryatids are so composed. The elbow reaching to the spine of the pelvis allows the arm to compose with the border of the torso and the lines of the legs. The continuous sweeping line of the arms and shoulders is well shown in Raphael's magnificent figure of the Angel releasing Peter from prison.

The sketches on the accompanying plate are sufficient to put the student on the track which he must pursue by his own observations in nature and art. I have only to add that a careful study of the lines of the nude figure will frequently suggest the composition of drapery best suited to express its action.

PLATE IX.

THE first fact to be considered in drapery is its uniformity; it may have any degree of thickness or of pliability, but it is necessarily uniform throughout. Hence the certainty of its behaviour and the evenness of its curves. The thicker the material the broader and more massive are its folds; if it is thin and flexible, the folds are more numerous and pipey; and the difference is still more marked on the figure, for the thinness of the stuff enables the wearer to take up a greater quantity, either to throw it over his shoulder, or to fasten it with a brooch, than would be possible with a heavier or harsher material. The folds of a soft and woolly texture flow in soft curves, while some materials have a tendency to crease either across the weft or the warp, which gives them a square and angular character.

If drapery is laid on any irregular object it will, of course, rest on its most prominent points; it will either fall perpendicularly from them, or the intermediate parts will hang in waves or festoons; and, if the drapery is ample, it will lie in radiating folds. In short, all folds radiate from points of support, or from points where they are gathered up according to the different fashions of the time. These simple facts are the basis on which the majority of draperies are constructed. If you take any figure, and arbitrarily fix a point of support, provided it is on a prominence, you may set out the foundation of a very respectable composition of drapery by drawing lines from it in every direction. Where there are two equal points of support the drapery falls in symmetrical festoons between them; but where one is predominant, the folds, particularly in a harsh material, will meet each other alternately, and form a more angular and varied Composition of Line. Where there is a great amplitude of drapery from one point of support, it will hang straight down; but the central line of the whole mass is, strictly speaking, the only one that is perpendicular; the others will be forced by the weight of the opposite folds out of their natural direction.

So far for drapery hanging from points. But drapery more often falls loosely over the body or a limb, a general direction being given to its folds by its being drawn round some other part of the body by a change of action or some such cause. Then it becomes more complex, and must be studied from nature. As a general rule, the folds

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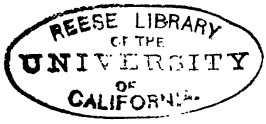
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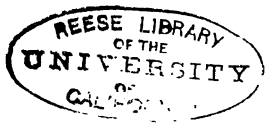
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PERUGINO

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will be shaken out from the front and upper parts of the body or limbs, and will be naturally found where there is more room for them; for we should never forget that depth is necessary to folds; where this ceases to be the case, the drapery must either be plain or in flat plaits.

Drapery gives mass, colour, variety, and motion to the figure. It is almost as necessary to art as clothing is to the body for warmth, comfort and decency. Strip everyone naked, and how few stories could painters tell intelligibly; not only would all historical subjects be impossible, but we should be unable to illustrate any fable or story that depended on the rank or calling of the actors. King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid could be nothing more than a man in love with a woman. Without drapery groups could not be massed, while any splendour of colour or variety of texture would be impossible. It is difficult to exaggerate its importances. Is it not then beyond measure extraordinary that it has no place in the programme of our studies—that its commonest principles are never alluded to, much less systematically taught?

PLATE X.

THE works of Perugino are perhaps more useful to the student than those of any other artist, because of the transparent artifices of their construction. No man so persistently adhered to a few types of attitude and drapery. Three out of every four of his figures are so much alike, particularly in the lower part of the drapery, that a tracing of one will almost exactly fit the others. This repetition is not to be defended, but it betrays his method; and that is what we want to learn. But we should be wrong to condemn him too hastily, even for his repetitions. His invariable grace is owing to the use of a few simple flowing curves, which, crossing over the figure, may be almost said to convert it into an ornamental composition. Indeed, his methods were adopted in decoration. Compare Fig. 1, Plate XII., which is from a majolica plate, with a similar figure in the present plate. Compare also the crossing over of the lines in the limbs, Plates II., III., IV., with the crossing over of the lines of the drapery. This crossing over has another important use; it counteracts the inevitable parallelism of lines in a group of standing figures—a parallelism which is still further concealed or counteracted by the great horizontal

folds which so frequently envelope the waist of the figures of Perugino—an artifice which Raphael was wise enough never to abandon: witness its constant occurrence where there are many standing figures, as in the "School of Athens," the "Parnassus," and many others of his works. The thin, silky hair, which did not break the oval contour of the head, the graceful loops of the banded head-dress, the radiating and flowing lines of the drapery, the refined and gentle air of the figures, and their graceful pose, all combined to convey a saint-like and almost heavenly beauty. It would be interesting to trace how far Perugino's devotional feeling could be formulated. It is the fashion to associate devotional feeling with some degree of artistic innocence, not to say imbecility; and devotianal art is generally the product of emotion rather than of intellect. Yet Perugino, whose works perhaps exhibit more of this quality than those of any other painter, was an atheist. He worked solely from the love of money, and more than any other man worked by receipt. It is, however, not impossible that Vasari may in some respects have been unjust to his memory; he records that Michael Angelo publicly called him a dolt and a blockhead. Michael Angelo's own idiosyncracy was too Herculean to be saint-like; he could represent as no man ever did before the solemn majesty of inspiration or the sublime grief of the divine Madonna; but there was none of the weakness and little of the tenderness which are characteristic of Christian devotion. He was stern but not ascetic; the necessities of his art, as well as his own nature, made him reject the attenuated form, the almost feminine weakness, which indicate a body in subjection to the soul. He could hardly have appreciated an art so diametrically opposed to his own, even had it been spontaneous; when he saw it produced by rule, and repeated over and over again for the mere sake of making money, his lofty and impetuous nature was driven to indignation, and he condemned the manufacture of saint-like imbecility in no measured terms. But the question for us to consider is not whether Michael Angelo's estimate of the man was just, but whether Perugino's works, notwithstanding the motive and means for their production, were sweet, impressive, and devotional. Now, this I think we must all agree they undoubtedly were. I dwell on this point, because it would seem to prove that qualities which in a poet from time immemorlal have been considered spontaneous and impalpable, seem to have been caught, and reduced to rule by the artist. May we not conclude from this that art is more teachable than poetry?

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GHIBERTI

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PLATE XI.

GHIBERTI was almost as persistent a mannerist as Perugino. His gracefulness is so monotonous that it palls upon us: after a lengthened study of his gates we have a positive longing for a discord. There is, however, one good in his constant repetition: it betrays his method. It is astonishing, and at first a little disappointing, to find how small a residuum is left when a man is analyzed and sifted; we seldom find at the bottom of the crucible more than one or two grains of pure gold. But the fact is, that the normal state of man is, not to have many ideas, but to have none at all; and so one or two grains of pure metal are quite enough to establish a fame for ever. A complete comprehension of one master's methods will give the student a power of analysis with others; and he would do well to arrange and classify the leading types, and the artifices by which they are varied, in the gates of Ghiberti, for in no other work will he find so many excellent draped figures in so small a space. In the folds of his draperies Ghiberti carried the principle of radiation to excess, though it must be confessed it is modified and concealed with considerable ingenuity. He generally takes a point about the chest or the hip, and draws a great number of curved lines radiating from it. Fig. 2 is perhaps the simplest example: and how very graceful and effective it is! All the other figures are in reality constructed on the same principle; but Fig. 3 affords a capital instance of his favourite variation, modifications of which may be detected in twenty or thirty others. Observe how very often one side of the figure is straight, the other curved. These artifices seem to have escaped the observation of Michael Angelo, who praised the gates of Ghiberti as much as he abused the works of Perugino: and yet there is as much repetition, as monotonous a grace, and as constant an adherence to formulæ in one as in the other; while the too great variety in the relief, the want of severity and compactness in the ornament, could hardly have met with the deliberate approval of the designer of the Sistine Chapel and the tomb of Julius II. Such is the caprice of genius! The remarks of the great are recorded without our knowing the circumstances under which they were made. He has dined with genial friends, and cordially recognizes what is good in a mediocre work; the next

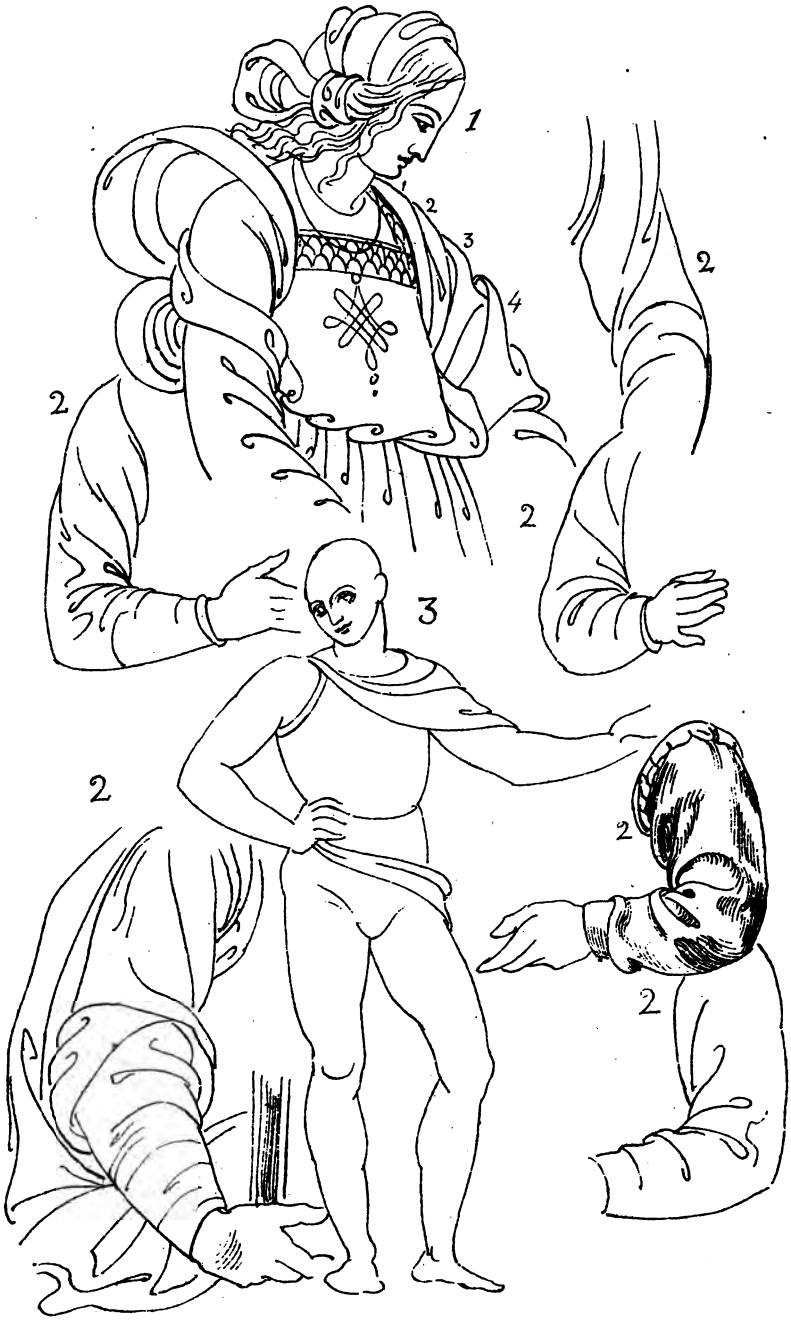
morning he is suffering from indigestion, and regards undoubted merit with a jaundiced eye.

If he had not the stern simplicity of Donatello or the tremendous intensity of Verrochio (whose equestrian statue of Colleone is the finest in the world), for skill and simplicity of composition, for picturesque effect, for the grace of his figures, for the finish of his work, Ghiberti deserves his fame; and when we consider that they were designed before he was 20 years old, his gates are certainly prodigies of art. They are remarkably in advance of their age; they have, indeed, more of the characteristics of late than of early work. His statues of St. Stephen and St. Matthew in Or San Michele exhibit a greater amplitude, but are constructed on the same principles as those which he used for so many of his figures in the gates.

The education of a goldsmith seems to develope artistic power. Is it possible that the small scale of the work may enable the artist to study and grasp the proportion of his whole composition, while the minute finish which it was necessary to attain in the precious metals made the finish that was sufficient for bronze or marble a matter of comparative ease? I often think that architects would get on better if they made small models of their buildings—not finished models *after* they had designed them, but rougher models which they designed and altered as they went on. In short, they should design in mass rather than in line.

PLATE XII.

WE have already noticed Fig. 1, from a majolica plate. This example is particularly interesting, because it shows that the Composition of Line was then known and used as a principle; for it is not at all impossible that an artist may have an intuitive perception of a law which he has never formulated even in his own mind; and many a man may be surprised to find that he has all his life been producing works which are referable to some simple receipt of which he was hitherto unconscious. Several of the figures show the arrangement of the lines of the sleeve when the arm is bent; they radiate with singular uniformity from the crease of the joint. The student should observe the variety and beauty of the folds in his own sleeve. Modern dress is not so ugly as is often supposed. The imitative method of treat-



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ment seems, with its usual ill-luck, to have seized the evil and omitted the good, and has thus thrown it into greater discredit than it deserves. The same arrangement of lines may be detected in the close-fitting sleeve and the more ample folds of the wider one. In thin materials the folds are thin and numerous; in thick buckram they are few and broad; but all are alike subject to the same law. Fig. 3 shows how easily a few lines on a nude figure will suggest drapery. A few overlapping folds about the knees and ankles, and the leg seems at once to be invested in tights or buskins; even leaving out the divisions of the toes will drape the feet. In the splendid and picturesque compositions of Polydorus and Julio Romano, figures in vigorous action are drawn nude; a slashed or scalloped edge below the deltoid is sufficient to suggest that the torso is encased in cuir bouilli. The arms are treated as nude. The cuirass is coloured to represent leather or metal; it is ornamented or covered with scales, and so the artist is able to combine the grand and expressive action of the human figure with the utmost splendour of ornament. The battle pieces of the school of Raphael are now little thought of, but this artifice is alone sufficient to elevate them above every composition in which it is not used, as any candid person can easily test by experiment.

Observe in Fig. 1 the skill with which the folds on the sleeve are varied. There is first a plain fold, then one divided, then a fold of more varied form, succeeded by another more complex still. Compare this with the gradation of the lobes of leaves in Plate XIX. Compare also the ornamental treatment of the folds of the tunic where it is pulled through the waistband, and hangs over it, with nearly the same arrangement in Fig. 1, Plate X. The folds at the waist have always afforded opportunities for much beauty and variety of line. Nothing can be simpler than a Greek tunic; it is little more than an oblong bag, yet the upper direction of the armholes and a girdle round the waist are enough to convert it into the most refined costume. In the Apostles of Perugino or Raphael, in the Sibyls by Michael Angelo, this simple dress affords a foundation and an agreeable contrast for the fuller cloak or toga, whose flowing lines are so often balanced by the perpendicular lines of the tunic below. When he drapes the model, the student will find that it is necessary for other than æsthetic reasons to use the tunic as an under garment, for it is impossible to drape a perfectly nude figure in the toga alone —it slips too readily off the polished shoulders.

PLATE XIII.

FOR study no man is so useful as Raphael. The student should get photographs of his best works, and trace their leading outlines. If he has hitherto been ignorant of composition, such a picture as the Holy Family, or the St. Catherine, in our National Gallery, will open his eyes to a new science. The examples on the opposite page will serve as suggestions for future independent study. I hope it is unnecessary for me to remind the reader that I am not writing a complete treatise on Composition of Line in pictorial art, but merely directing the attention of the National scholars to the universality of this law, by examples taken from the works of different artists.

The change of Raphael's style may be stated as an increase of amplitude and mass rather than of any principle of construction. In his early manner the limbs are more attenuated, the draperies more scant, than in his later works. This change is not peculiar to him.

In the progress of art generally, as well as of each individual artist, the tendency is to become broader and more ample. The young student invariably draws the limbs more elongated and meagre than they really are; and I have often surprised a pupil by measuring the true proportion on his work. It is amusing to hear critics condemn those who have adopted a broader style than they approve. They call them "sensual," "pagan," and many hard names, forgetting that all their criticism, however ingeniously they may attempt to conceal it, can never mean anything more than, "I like this," "I don't like that," and that it is far more likely that the "I" should be wrong than the work they criticise. A sour ascetic will condemn amplitude—a man in the vigour of mature knowledge will perhaps think the earlier work shows more weakness than devotion.

There is room for all. There is art to every man's taste; and if ever the public could be brought to understand what the criticism of the day really is, it would speedily become extinct—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

The student should carefully study those works which are easily accessible. First of all the "Cartoons;" for, though little of the actual execution can be attributed to Raphael, the composition is undoubtedly his. The expression of the faces, the action of the figures, combine to tell the story in a way that is at once effective,

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MICHAEL ANGELO

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dramatic, and simple. They are large, manly, free, decorative works; the execution is what would in these days be called "Academic"—in other words, it is the straightforward work of men who knew their business and did it. If they had stopped to talk, or even to think of half the nonsensical refinements that critics now pretend to see in their work, they would never have got through the job; for the drawings had to be done in a given time for the tapestry weavers to work from. Incomparably the finest part of the cartoons is the heads of the Apostles in "The Charge to Peter." These are painted with all the care bestowed on an easel picture, and are probably by Raphael himself. If the nude is sometimes treated in the grandest manner—as in "The Sacrifice at Lystra"—it is at other times positively bad, as in the arm of the cripple at "The Beautiful Gate." The feet are generally good, the hands as generally indifferent; the draperies are finely cast, and, for the purpose for which they were wanted, magnificently painted. I have reason to suspect that the present state of the cartoons suggests a finer quality of colour than they really had when new. The wear and tear they went through at the hands of the tapestriers, the neglect and decay of ages, have combined to produce an obscurity which is very congenial to the imagination of critics. If art is ever mentioned in heaven—which God forbid—and critics are ever lucky enough to get there,[1] no one will laugh at them more than Julio Romano, Giovanni da Udine, and the other men who actually did the work which the critics pretend to worship.

PLATE XIV.

THE characteristics of the art of Michael Angelo are simplicity of outline and squareness of form. The greatness of men might very justly be weighed by the degree of their comprehension of these two qualities. Titian

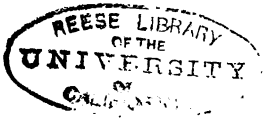
[1] "Dante, da principio, descrisse il profondissimo Inferno quale un sito ove i dannati erano sforzati a sentire interminabili censure sull' Arte.

"L'effetto di tale pratica su quelli sciagurati fu di commuovere e d'ira e di fastidio il loro cerebro, in modo ch' esso fermentò, e cosi fortuitamente sfuggivasene quale icore pe' fori' del naso, nel vuoto cranio de' medesimi non altro che acri vapori lasciando.

"In questa misera condizione acerbi censori essi ne addivennero, e il duro patimento da loro prima sofferto a nuovi dannati implacabili inflissero."

and Sebastian del Piombo well understood the first, but in the second no man has ever approached Michael Angelo. A comparison of the sculpture, and more especially of the bronzes, of the cinque-cento period with those of the antique, will show that the Italians knew the value of this quality better than their ancestors. But it was not only by squareness of form (a subject which will be treated more fully in "Lectures on the Human Figure"), but in the frequent occurrence of horizontal lines, that we may detect the hand of Michael Angelo. It is true they would naturally occur in sitting figures, but Michael Angelo never failed to emphasize them. If we compare his prophets and Sibyls with similar figures by Raphael or any other artist, his will be the stronger, the firmer; it is the immovable solidity of their composition that gives them the air of almost awful repose. He was well aware of all the artifices adopted by Ghiberti or Perugino, but he felt the necessity of counteracting a too graceful flow of radiating lines by straight, and more especially by horizontal ones. A bold continuous sweep of line is another characteristic of the great Florentine: it can best be studied in the spandrils which contain the genealogy of our Lord, for these, being executed with extraordinary rapidity, betray his method. (See Figs. 4 and 5.) Where any other artist would put a seat, a book, or a scroll into picturesque perspective, he would make them straight and square; he was a classic, as distinguished from a Goth; and all his work is stern, severe, simple, but more especially square. He seemed almost disgusted with grace, and preferred rugged discord to monotonous harmony. There was a majesty and a mystery about all his work which, I am glad to say, defies analysis. He has been condemned because his moving figures are not perfectly natural—they appear to pause. So far from this being a defect, it seems to me one of the chief attributes of the grandest art. A sculptor would naturally and rightly so treat his figures; a stately slowness is an element of size, and gives a sensation of strength and repose. A mouse is quicker than a giant.

Michael Angelo is simple without being empty; broad yet full of detail; tremendous in action, yet statuesque—almost architectural—in repose, so squarely built up are his figures. Beside his drawing, that of every other master appears loose and feeble; everything is clearly and firmly articulated, and everything is generalized; every detail has evidently been digested and reproduced—it bears the impress of his mind. Study, for instance, the feet of the slave. How broad, simple, easy it all appears! how little apparently is done!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ANTIQUE

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yet no one has ever done so much. No one before his time had ever so completely rendered the firm, square, bony joints above, the elastic pad below, or the continuous flow of line to the ground. Take the feet of any of the antique, you will find them inferior in the expression of these qualities. This knowledge, this firm comprehension, is not derived from the imitation, but from the study of nature; and no man has ever studied and assimilated as he did. You never find empty spaces in his figures; there is no shirking or going lightly over parts not fully understood; there is no reliance on mere copying of appearances. His grasp of every detail is firm and exact; yet his feeling for simplicity and grandeur of form so preponderated over his knowledge, that his detail is never obtrusive. It is to be hoped in these days of universal education that even critics may be taught to comprehend and respect such profound attainments, and that the Sistine frescoes may at length be allowed their legitimate influence in the world of art.

PLATE XV.

ANTIQUE draperies are more natural and more pipey than those of the Renaissance, because, in the first place, they are transcripts from everyday costume; and, in the second, a somewhat liney mode of treatment was rendered necessary by the absence of colour, as explained in the "Lecture on Contrast." They display the figure more skilfully, and are more refined, beautiful, and chaste than the drapery of any subsequent period; compared with them, the sculptured draperies of Michael Angelo look like pieces of rock. Fig. 1 is a well-known example of the skill with which the ancients represented drapery in motion; it may be compared with Fig. 3 in Plate XIII. Many of the Mœnads show the same flow of line. Fig. 4 is a very remarkable example of the radiation of lines, and it is evident on examination that many ornamental bas-reliefs were composed on well understood rules. The earliest archaic drapery consisted of rigid radiating folds or plaits, generally terminating in formal zigzags or cascades; they were often imitated at later periods on account of their severe symmetrical beauty. The composition of the lines of the toga were sometimes too monotonous to be pleasing. The exact similarity of the folds in different statues shows the care the wearers must have taken to put

on the toga in the fashionable manner, a manner which, with our present knowledge, it is exceedingly difficult to acquire. Indeed, there are few parts of an artist's business so wearisome as cutting out the patterns and arranging the folds of obsolete costume. A skilful and ingenious tailor would save artists many an hour of vexatious and often useless labour. The student should consult Hope's "Costume of the Ancients;" Weiss's "Kostumkunde," Stuttgart, 1856; Willemin's "Choix de Costumes Civils et Militaires des Peuples de l'Antiquité," Paris, 1798; Carl Koehler's work (Dresden, 1871);" Ferrario's very complete book on "Costume;" Smith's "Classical Dictionary," under Chiton, Pallium, Tunica, and Toga.

It is difficult to find a material which is at the same time thin and heavy enough to imitate the small and continuous folds of antique draperies and exhibit the form of the figure without being themselves meagre or empty. Old calico soaked in clay water, and thrown on a clay model, makes the nearest approach to them. When the model becomes dry, a syringe will restore the fulness and weight of the drapery. But it is exceedingly difficult to arrange anything like complete drapery for a lay figure; the natural motion of the living figure is necessary to shake the dress into easy folds.

A short tunic with armholes, a long tunic with sleeves, another of more ample and thicker material, a girdle, a pallium, a toga, and a piece of cloth 12 feet by 6 feet, will enable the student to arrange the leading varieties and combinations of antique dress. It is perhaps as well to remind him that he is not bound to adhere to draperies as exhibited in sculpture. I have already explained why they are pipey and massive. The drawings of drapery on Greek vases are also liney, because, being treated in the flat manner without shadow, it is the only way of representing folds; but when the artist attempts a composition of more advanced art, and has to attend to roundness of form, breadth, and chiaroscuro, a different treatment becomes necessary. Owing to the almost total absence of Greek painting, we have not improbably a false notion of Greek drapery. A person who had recently studied Hope's book of "Costume" would be apt to think the draperies in Raphael's "School of Athens" were more unlike the antique than they really are; for in such a picture the straight and liney style of sculpturesque and archaic art would have been entirely false; and many an artist gets a reputation for classical taste because he does not know enough about art to treat his painted draperies in a manner broader than would be proper in sculpture. A little know-

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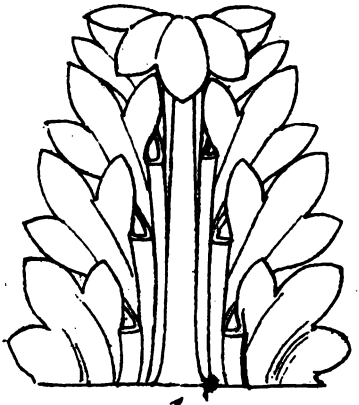

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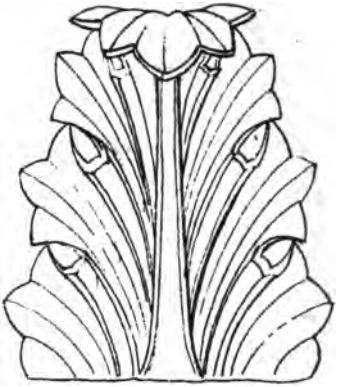

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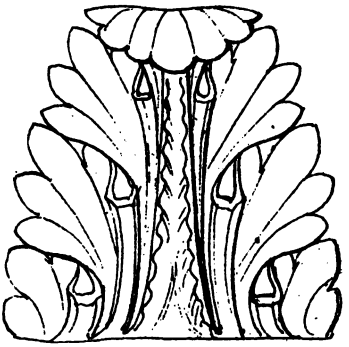

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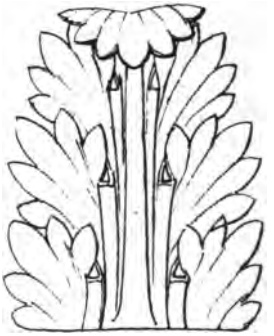

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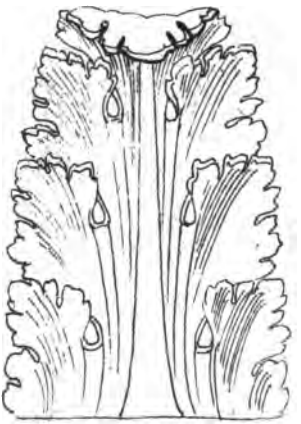

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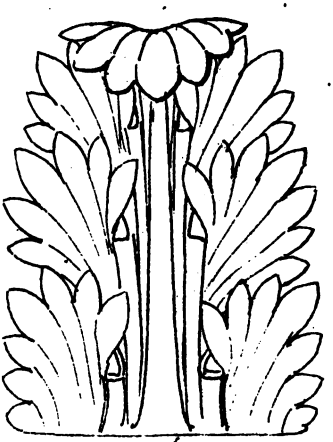

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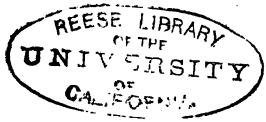
much of the ornament is nothing more than lumps of coarsely carved leaves stuck on at regular intervals. I am far from ignoring the effect and beauty of much Gothic work; many of the capitals, for instance, in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral have a stern archaic vigour that would certainly not be improved by the delicacy and grace which an Italian artist would have added to them. But it is the fashion to exalt and attribute every excellency to every phase of Gothic, whereas the plain truth is that little of it has any artistic merit beyond contributing to the fretted and picturesque effect of the building. Comparisons are especially odious in art; but if made, the Goths will not be the gainers by them; and they would be wise to be silent. The fact that one can get twenty carvers who can execute Gothic ornament to one that can do anything resembling the Italian style is a conclusive proof of the greater refinement of the latter. An attempt has been made to meet the difficulty of getting artistic work properly done by the use of terra-cotta, and it must at once be admitted that ornament, which exhibits the very touch and handling of the original model, is infinitely finer, as well as cheaper and more permanent, than a coarsely carved copy in stone. But there is this objection—the finer, the more varied and artistic the work, the higher the organic rank of the elements of which it is composed, the less ought it to be repeated; so that according to the strict laws of art, the gain in the use of terra-cotta is not so great as it first appears. Besides, work modelled in clay, though it may have sweetness and gradation of tint hard to be attained in stone, cannot compare with it in crispness and precision—qualities of greater decorative value in architecture. A careful comparison of some of the Lombardi specimens will show how much they owe to the chisel and drill. By the side of them terra-cotta squeezes of modelled work, however artistic, will look almost like cast-iron. One reason, no doubt, of this is, that the first thing the manufacturer does when he gets the model into his hands is to fill up all the sharp and deep cuttings, to ensure his clay leaving the mould easily. Nothing can supersede carving for decoration that is near enough to be seen and examined; but, unluckily, at present we have no carvers capable of producing good work. Compare, for instance, the Arabesques in the panels of the piers of the India Office with any scrap of old Italian work. You see what the design is evidently intended for; but there is not one square inch of the executed detail that is better than barbaric Byzantine.

PLATE XIX.

THE group marked A contains suggestions for leaflets from which the student can construct the perfect leaves, taking care to vary the complex examples more than the simple ones. That marked B shows how to work out an element to any degree of complexity. The ordinary Tudor flower is perhaps the simplest example of this process. If we draw a square, and put four round blots just within the centre of each side, and then treat each quarter in a similar way with smaller blots, and proceed in this manner, we shall get a Tudor flower of any degree of complexity we choose to give it. The great advantage of this simple method is that the character of the leaf is preserved throughout, however complicated it may be. The lobes are all similar, and occupy a space which is of the form of the original element itself. Nature herself seems to work on this principle, and the student should carefully study a compound, or what botanists (who are fond of hard names) call a supra-de-compound leaf, and he will soon know more than I can teach him here. If he will do this, he will never rebel against law, but will learn how the utmost variety and beauty are consistent with it. C gives examples of gradation or proportion—a most interesting and universal principle in leaves, and I suspect in all nature too. When once pointed out it is a pleasure to watch its constant recurrence. A crysanthemum leaf will afford a subject for the astonishment, as well as admiration, of any one who has hitherto failed to detect this principle.

PLATE XXI.

THE Spandril by Alfred Stevens exhibits great variety in the character and treatment of foliage, and also in the degree of its relief, some parts being very prominent, while others melt into the ground. It is full of valuable suggestions, and is a perfect repertory of the various treatments of the Acanthus. Observe the skill with which its masses are ornamentally disposed, and form bosses at regular intervals above the top of the arch. These bosses are made up of rosettes or buds which are well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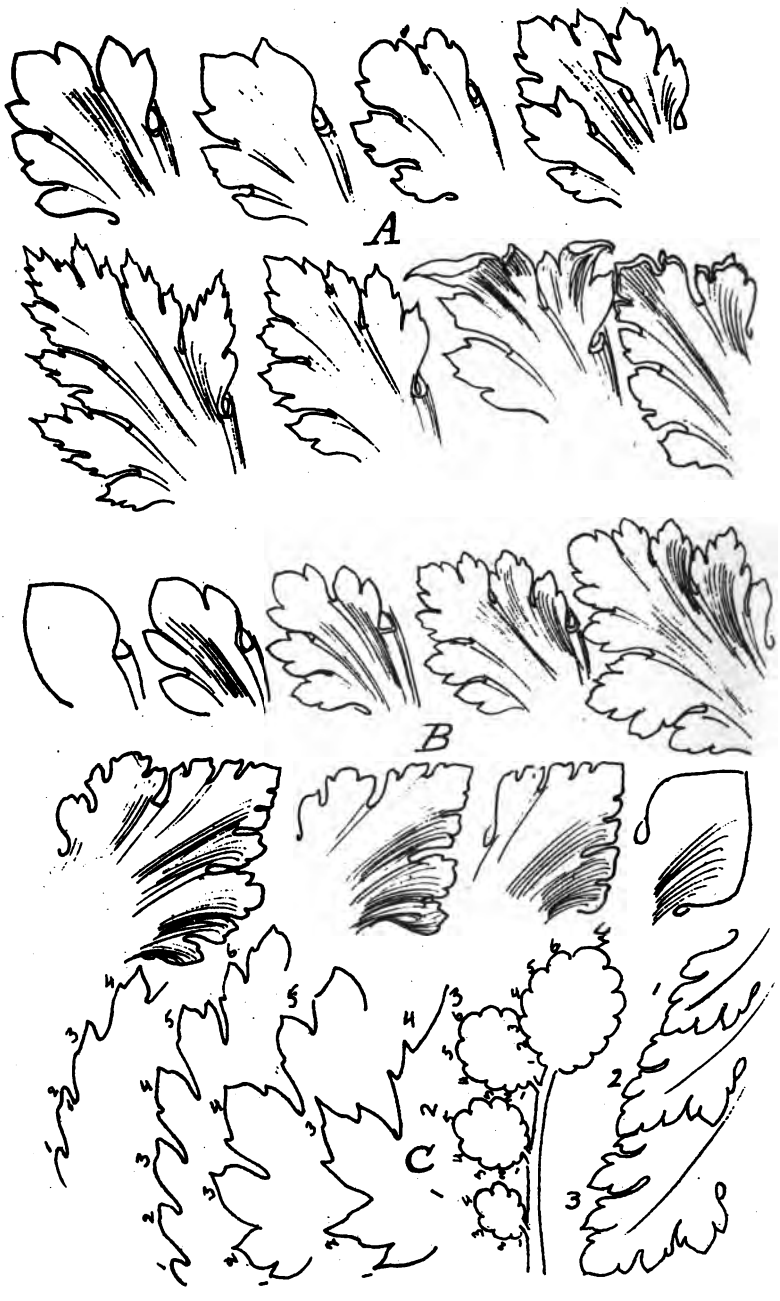

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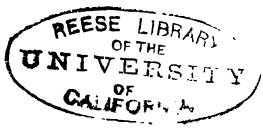
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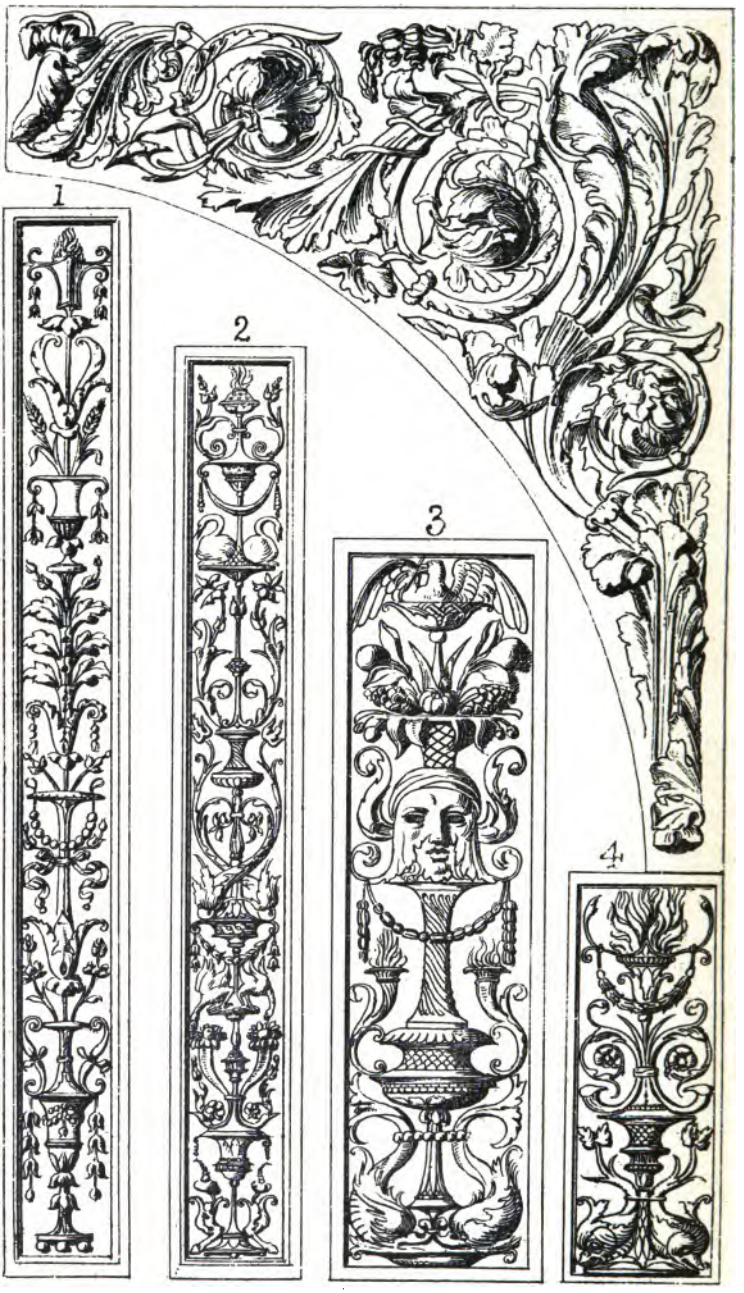

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worth our study; not only is each boss different, but each group of leaves has evidently been designed to be as unlike its neighbour as possible. The character of the foliage is peculiar; it is more obtuse than either the Antique or the Renaissance; it is more varied, more studiously elaborated. We cannot but admire the taste and labour displayed in such a composition as this; and when we consider that all this was expended on the spandril of a firegrate we must respect the artist still more. But I may perhaps venture to doubt if it is either so effective or so pleasing as many spandrils on which not a tithe of the labour or thought has been spent. Its line is not always satisfactory; the foliage is sometimes wanting in the rigidity which is so necessary to express its vitality; it looks a little flaccid and limp. There is also something incongruous in the great variety of plants which seem to be growing from one stem, while many of its tendrils and smaller leaves are a little untidy and loose. I speak with diffidence of the work of so great an artist, but I cannot help feeling that a simpler composition of one sort of leaf, without much variety either of form or relief, would have been better in every respect.

I have already described the general principles of the construction of the ornament in the panels of pilasters. The examples I have given, though not without faults, will not the less serve to illustrate my remarks. Observe in all of them the horizontal lines, which not only counteract the curves, and strengthen the ornament, but allow of its being built up in regular stages, or platforms,—a necessity in so narrow a space. A central stalk, tazze, and vases are common to all the examples; in No. 1 the rest of the ornament is composed of foliage alone, Nos. 2 and 3 of foliage combined with animal forms. No. 4 would be better without the dolphins at the bottom, not only because they are too lumpy and inelegant, but because there is nothing of the same organic rank to balance them above. The detail in No. 3 is out of scale, the gigantic mask being out of all proportion with the flaming horns beneath it. Each pilaster has a character of its own. No. 1 is in this respect the most consistent—and, in all, the ornament is evenly distributed; its relief also is uniform. There is no attempt to blend some parts with the ground while others are very prominent; all is clearly defined. One of the commonest faults of young artists is the introduction of too many incongruous elements; some of the finest pilasters are composed of foliage alone. It is always as well to exclude the figure from the ornamentation of

pilasters or borders which enclose figure subjects in the centre. An adherence to the rule of architectural distribution will, however, lead to the sound and appropriate use of ornamental elements. The stiles of cinque-cento pilasters are more narrow than modern architects usually make them, and the panel is not so deeply sunk; and this gives them a greater air of refinement and breadth. The projection of the cap is moderate, and in short pilasters the cap also is short in proportion. The ornament on a pilaster should be carved *in situ*, so that the artist may take the fullest advantage of the light; in the jamb of a window a very good effect may be produced by bevelling off the ornament towards the light, and cutting it sharp down to the ground on the dark side. There is a pilaster so treated in the Kensington Museum.

PLATES XVI. XX. XXII. XXIII. XXIV. XXV.

IT is unnecessary to describe these plates; they contain examples of several of the elements mentioned in my list in order to show the sort of objects the student should collect. He would do well to arrange his note-book at the very commencement of his studies, allowing much or little space to each class, according to its beauty, variety, or adaptability to ornamental purposes. His drawing should be exact enough for useful reference, or at least to recall each object to his own memory; he should note below from what place, building, or book he copied it; he should also have a full index for reference, and keep a list of the books he has found most useful. These may appear trivial matters, but much time is wasted for the want of them. If he sees or thinks of anything that is likely to be of use to him in his profession, let him note it at once for future investigation. By careful cultivation, and by this alone, his memory may become copious and exact; but till he has proved it to be so, he would be wise to mistrust it altogether.

A list fairly written out on one sheet will give a clearer conception of the arrangement of the elements than merely reading the lecture about them; for when we have got to the end of a lecture we seldom remember very much of its beginning. A sheet so arranged will

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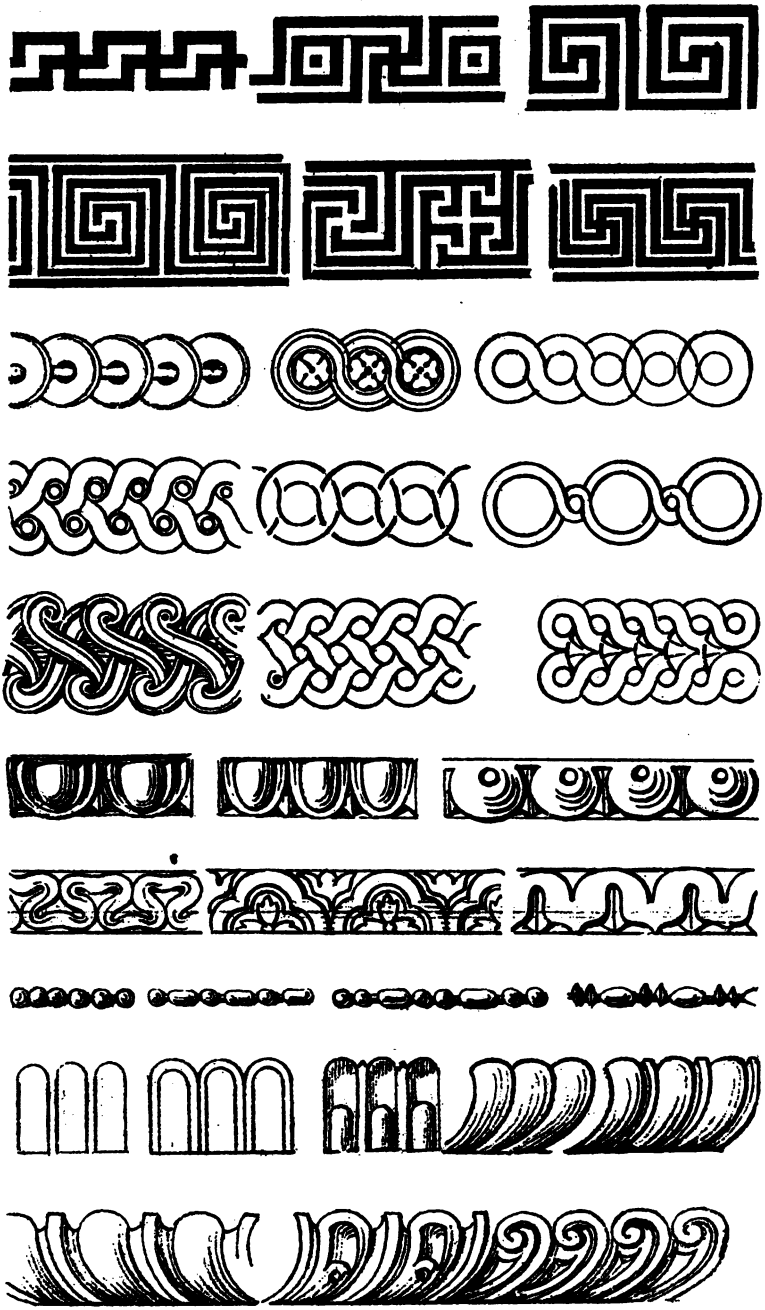

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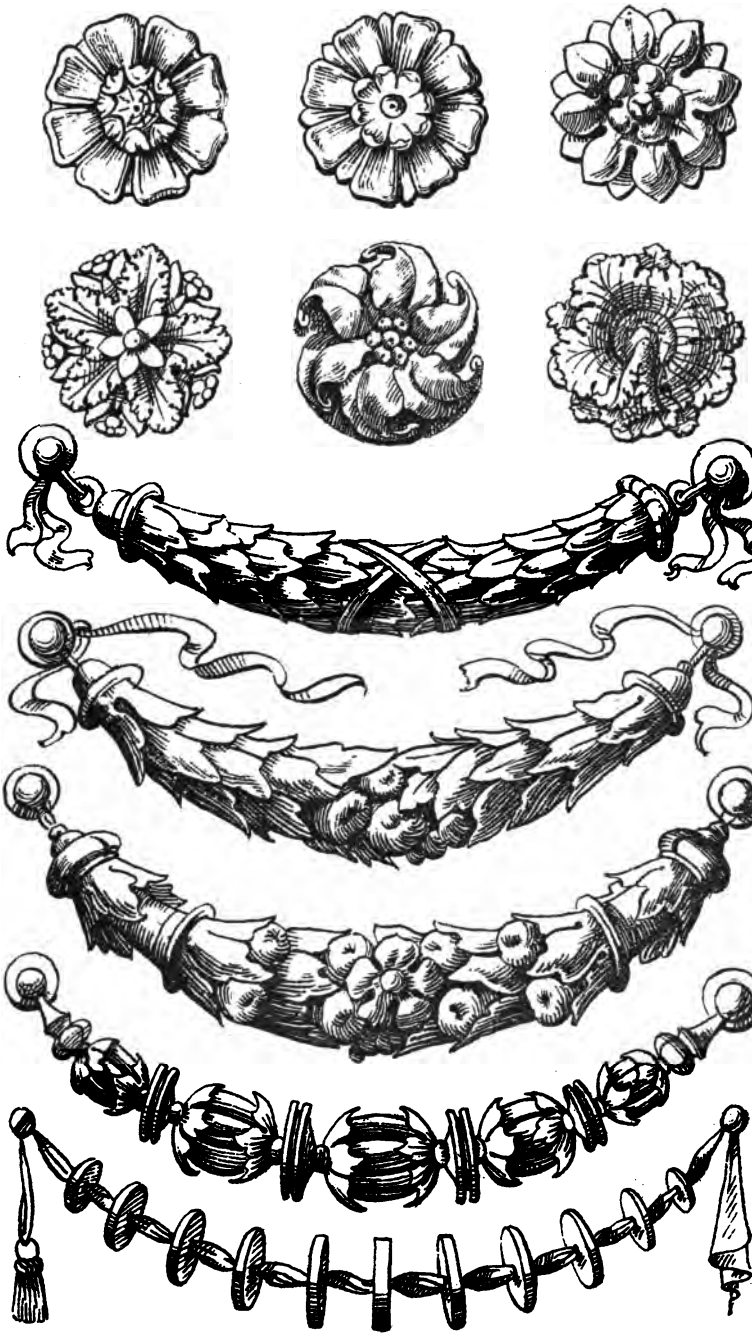

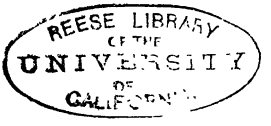
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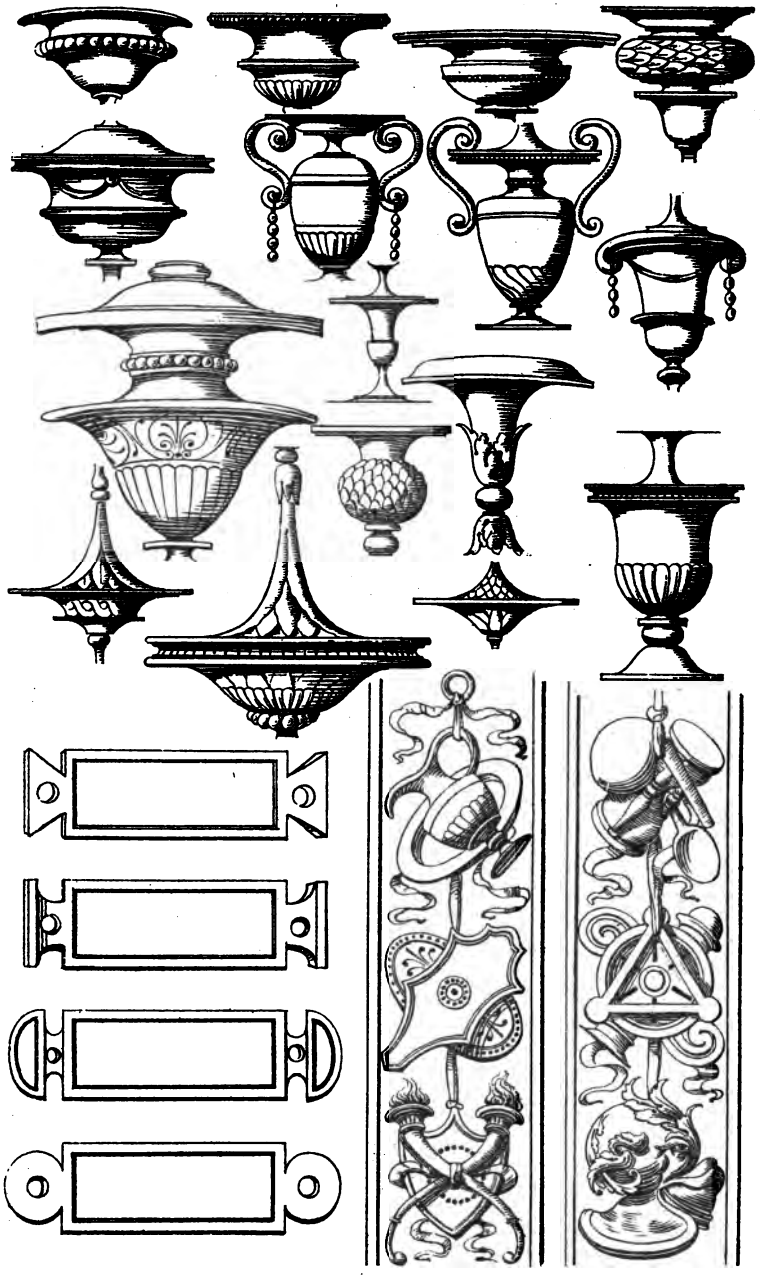

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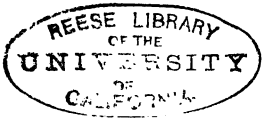
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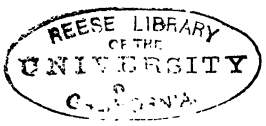
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serve as an index, and also be of use in the architectural distribution of ornament. In adapting the elements to the decoration of a building, its style and character are the first things to be considered: if severe and simple, only the simplest elements must be used; but these must be placed in their proper order. In a very florid building, we might begin at the other end of the scale, and have painted subjects in the vaults and spandrils, descending by degrees to more flat and symmetrical ornamentation on those features of the building which were more architecturally essential, but never, even in the most solid parts, becoming too severe. In short, the artist can play a tune on any part of the scale he likes, so long as he adheres to the *relative* order of the elements, and respects their organic and ornamental rank; he may exhaust the resources of the whole scale, or he may limit himself to a few of its simplest elements.

I need hardly say that foliage combined with the higher organic forms, is one of the commonest motives in ornament. Dolphins, lions, sphinxes, tritons, mermaids, and the human torso have foliated terminations. Ears, beards, horns, even helmets and shields, sprout out into leaf; so that in this respect there is a mixture of elements. Indeed, few things can be incorporated into ornament without some such modification as this—which, as it were, binds them together in the same composition. (See Plate XXV., Frontispiece.) Shells afford valuable suggestions for ornament; they are constructed on one simple principle—addition to their margins. Between bivalves and spiral shells there is less difference than might be imagined; a slight deviation from direct radiation from a centre, and what would have been a limpet or a part of a cockle becomes a turbinated shell. The full-grown shell retains unaltered in its apex the infant nucleus to which successive convolutions have added size without altering its form.

It is interesting to note in the different character of shells a resemblance to epochs in art. Some have a Greek simplicity, while in others we may detect the picturesque bizarrerie of the Rococo. It would be difficult to invent a new shell, so completely has every avenue of invention been exhausted by nature. Each development is worked out to the utmost practicable exaggeration; mere rudimentary prominences may be traced through a series of gradations, till at last they become developed into spikes, whose tenuity and length are only limited by the weakness of the material, or the impossibility of the animal existing with such inconvenient appendages.

Fish seem to have been designed in the same exhaustive manner. We have fishes all head and fishes all tail; or fins are developed till they resemble large wings extending far beyond the vestige which marks the position rather than the existence of a tail. These extravagances and comicalities of nature are more especially instructive to the ornamental artist.

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